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JANUARY 22 1982

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## Making a homeland for the mind

By George Steiner

GEORG LUKÁCS:

Eine Autobiographie im Dialog

307pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

EVA FEKETE and EVA KARÁDI

(Editors)

György Lukács: His Life in Pictures

and Documents

265pp. Budapest: Corvina

9 63 13 07751

Great intelligence can be a homeland. "Before 1945", remarks Georg Lukács, "I never travelled in Europe with a legal passport." A Hungarian, he wrote almost the totality of his works in German. Exile, more or less clandestine, in Vienna, Berlin, Moscow, was Lukács's natural habitat. He held no university post till the age of sixty. His most consequential intervention in actual revolutionary politics, the "theses" on the relations between the agricultural and the industrial proletariat which he propounded at the time of the Bodo Kun programme and the Second Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party, appeared under the pseudonym "Blum".

Yet, in another sense, Lukács was deep-rooted. He was curiously dismissive in reference to his own Judaism, but a Jew to the tip of his fingers. Unhoused, peregrine, domestic in ostracism, he is one of that tragic constellation - Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, Adorno, Herbert Marcuse - of Jewish abstractionists, possessed by a messianic rage for logic, for systematic order in the social condition of man. Lukács's Marxism is, in essence, a refusal of the world's incoherence, of the murderous stupidities whereby men and women misconduct their lives. Like the other Jewish self-exiles whose radicalism out of Central Europe has so incisively marked the century, Lukács is an heir in immanence to the transcendent absolute of Spinoza.

He made his choice in 1919. He moved into the Marxist promise of social justice or, rather, into the Marxist promise of method, of a contract with reason and a rational grasp of human affairs, as he would dwell, and he never left it. When the Party restored to Lukács in 1967 the card it had taken from him before his participation in the Hungarian insurrection of 1956 and in the Imre Nagy regime, the pariah ripped that he had never been outside the KPU. It had, temporarily, left him. At times of extreme pressure, during the late 1950s and early 60s, Lukács was urged to emigrate, to accept one or another of the prestigious academic solicitations from "outside". Kádár would have let him go. But Lukács never wavered. To him the capitalist world was not only historically doomed, but a domain of contingency, almost of anarchy. Even at its cruellest, the lodging of necessity, as Hegel and Marx had, after Kant, constructed it, was preferable.

Here, as Lukács and the Frankfurt School plainly, agonizingly perceived, a solution may be found for the problem of how abstract thought, the life of the intellect, can be knit to historical reality, to the exactions and the dignity of concrete existence. No member of the intelligentsia since Rousseau had experienced more acutely, nearer his nerve-ends, than Lukács, the menace of alienation. At home in Marxism, in the conviction that his philosophic-aesthetic critique bore immediately on the material facts of current history and society, he could endure, indeed prosper in, the marginality of his biographical circumstance. When first I called on him, in the winter of 1957-8, in a house still pock-marked with shell-bursts and grenade-splinters, I stood speechless before the armada of his printed works, as if crowded the bookshelves. Lukács seized on my chair in a motion at once vulnerable and amused: "You want to know how one gets work done? It's easy. House-arrest, Steiner, house-arrest!"

Informed by his doctors that he had not long to live, Lukács, in 1971, agreed to set down a memoir of his personal life and thought. He did so in stenographic style, under the title *Gelebtes Denken*. But his strength was failing. He agreed to use this sketch as the basis for a series of interviews with Erzsébet Vezér and István Eörsi. These took place in May 1971 and were taped. The text before us is, as a result, many-layered. It is an autobiography "in dialogue", together with Lukács's own fragmentary jottings.

Lukács has edited and prefaced the original which is, in turn, translated into German by Hans-Henning Pätzke. To complicate matters further, the editor has, at certain points, amended or clarified the tapes, inserting passages from Lukács's written torso. Questions arise, inevitably, as to Lukács's own intentions, with their intricate interplay of private candour and public legacy. They arise also with regard to editorial treatment and the translation of Hungarian expressions, turns of phrase, allusions, which Lukács was, himself, using in ways influenced by a life-time of composition and reflection in and through German. *Gelebtes Denken* has elements of a postscript; it invites decoding. Its fundamental authenticity, however, is evident. Lukács's voice, the often arduous, nervous pulse of his idiom and motions of spirit, comes through unmistakably.

There is scant comfort in this book for the liberal persuasion. Nor is there any solace for those who (naïvely?) harbour the belief that any man of obvious intellectual stature and moral awareness who has committed his strengths to Communism must, in the face of the Gulag and of Soviet realities, end his days in more or less avowed disenchantment and remorse. Lukács's self-portrait is that of a "hard-liner". A quotation from Hebbel's *Judith* seems to have been talismanic to him: "Wenn Du zwischen mich und meine Tat eine Sünde stellst: wer bin ich, dass ich mit Dir darüber hadere, dass ich mich Dir entziehen sollte!" The sentence is not easy to translate or interpret. "If/when you interpose sin between myself and my deed, who am I to quarrel with you, what justification would there be for me to withdraw from you?" Lukács sees this "affirmative query" as the embodiment of the *ethischen Konflikt*, or ethical dilemma. There are situations - perhaps all genuine political and revolutionary situations are such - in which one must act rightly (*richtig*), even "justly", yet "unethically" (*unethisch*).

Pressed to justify his mainly passive but, on occasion, positive stance towards the Moscow purge trials, Lukács formulates a twofold apology. At the time (he was himself a refugee in Stalin's capital, an individual whose cosmopolitan, Jewish marginality made of him a potential victim), protest would have been futile. It would have meant suicide and, in consequence, the removal of an active soul and brain from the world-struggle against Fascism and Nazism. Lukács's retrospective defence is subtler. Do we, he challenges, worry over the legality over the due process in respect of evidence, of the successive trials of the Girondins, of Danton, of Robespierre? Do we not, on the contrary, observe these episodes as necessary crises in the ultimately humane logic and libertarian dynamics of the French Revolution? Why, then, not extend the same understanding to those internal, factional struggles which, according to Lukács, were an inevitable part of the evolution of the Soviet Union towards industrial modernity, towards the sense of national and "Stalinist" cohesion which was to make possible the defeat of Hitler? Within this general perspective, moreover, Lukács draws pointed distinctions. He does not disguise his distaste for Trotsky and Trotskyism. He judges them as agencies of anarchic muddle which had to



Georg Lukács

to editorial treatment and the translation of Hungarian expressions, turns of phrase, allusions, which Lukács was, himself, using in ways influenced by a life-time of composition and reflection in and through German. *Gelebtes Denken* has elements of a postscript; it invites decoding. Its fundamental authenticity, however, is evident. Lukács's voice, the often arduous, nervous pulse of his idiom and motions of spirit, comes through unmistakably.

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one of the two super-powers in the post-war era?

At the moment of the Soviet intervention in Prague, in 1968, Lukács is rumoured to have said something to the effect that, perhaps, the course of socialist-revolutionary history since 1917 had been a dead end, that the entire experiment would have to be begun all over again "in some other time and place". *Gedanken* is made of sterner stuff. Despite the human suffering, the waste of human and material resources which it brought about, despite its vulgarization and even negation of the authentic Marxist concept of "historical necessity", Stalinism amounts to a phase of positive achievement.

Certain reflexes of sensibility, certain uses of language follow on such an assessment. Reflecting on the show-trials and political executions in post-war Hungary, Lukács speaks of "ein präventiver Mord" (a preventive murder). If the German translation is accurate, Lukács qualifies the tortures whereby false confessions were exacted from such victims as László Rajk as "bedenklich", i.e. as "giving ground for thoughtful concern". On the eve of his death and in the sanctuary of his eminence, Lukács had no tactical need to resort to such expressions. They represent that spell which brute power, which terror in *praxis* often exercise on the imagination, on the nervous system, of the scholar. They represent also, I think, that zest for casuistry, for the formally brilliant defence of the indefensible, which Thomas Mann had noted as detailed in Lukács when he made of him the original of Naphta in *The Magic Mountain*.

The personal, critical relation to Mann, as Lukács recalls it, as it is eloquent in photographs and documents across decades, was central to Lukács's literary theory. What Balzac had been to Marx, the author of *Buddenbrooks* was to Lukács. Here was an arch-conservative patrician, an explicit defender of high-bourgeois values, whose genius for insight, whose sheer seriousness as an artist, made of his novels the irrefutable critique of a dying society. Lukács saw in Mann's fictions resplendent proof for the tenet that "classical realism" cannot lie, that whatever the conscious ideology and class-interests of the realist (Goethe, Balzac, Tolstoy, Mann), his findings will be "radical", i.e. in the true sense of the word, "revolutionary". Mann, in turn, found in Lukács an incomparable "reader between the lines".

Contacts with Brecht were notoriously ambiguous, even polemic. To



Two literary and art reviews which published the work of Lukács and Béla Balázs, considered by Lukács to be one of the most important Hungarian poets - from the second of the books reviewed here.

Brecht, Lukács was the incarnation of the Hegelian academic legislating to the arts without being himself endowed with any creative instincts. Lukács recognized Brecht's talents. But Brecht was, in the final analysis, a bohemian, an exhibitionist of prodigious manipulative ruses who had borrowed from Marxism certain rhetorical short-cuts. Brecht flourished in the Expressionist milieu; all its logic in the febrile historical moment, was merely the prelude to the surrealist and modernist crazes which he so magisterially rejected. In these memoirs, the antagonism mellows. In late years, the two men met on terms of amicable distrust. And Lukács, who was at the time at a spa (a characteristically Victorian touch), came to Berlin to speak at Brecht's funeral. Survival had become Lukács's métier.

Great shades crowd his tenacious, often unforgiving remembrance. Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Karl Mannheim were among his teachers or colleagues. Though their theoretic and pragmatic ways parted, Lukács retains to the end his respect for the messianic innocence of Ernst Bloch. When he was commissar for education and culture under Béla Kun, the young Lukács recruited for his committee on music Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály and Ernst Dohnányi. Imperial and insurrectionary Budapest, small enough to bring talent, and Jewish talent in particular, into close proximity, Lukács knew and interacted with Frederik Aotla, Arnold Hauener and the formidable Charles

de Tolnay. The Polányis were intimates. And it is just this unrecapitulated wealth of emotional-intellectual exchange, this very late (last 7) season of European humanism, which gave to Lukács's early essays, gathered in *Die Seele und die Formen*, their delicate, penetrating sadness (witness the pioneering article on Kleckgaard). This is the "Walter Benjamin" hour in Lukács. He was to repudiate it, as he was to repudiate Benjamin himself for his hermeticism and tragic untimeliness.

In these conversations, Lukács scorns the teutonic-bourgeois notion of a *Lebenswerk*, of an *opera omnia* leather-bound for ages to come. Books, he rules, are provisional acts in the validating or, more often, negating context of historical-social-material conditions. Nevertheless, major phases of concentration and discursive form do emerge, not only in the writings themselves, but in the estimations drawn by Lukács to retrospect. After the experimental and pre-Marxist attempts at establishing a methodological basis for "impressionalism" (there can, of course, be no such basis), came the years of epiphrastic criticism, of consolidation in the guiding light of Lukács's study, in Moscow, of Marx's 1844 manuscripts. The tones on French and German realism, on the young Hegel, on the historical novel (with the key revaluation of Walter Scott), on the Goethe-Schiller correspondence, constitute a massive ensemble. Though bitterly attacked for its partisan crudity, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* still strikes me as a challenging indictment. Lukács asks: what are

the affinities between, the continuities from, German Idealist and post-Idealist metaphysics and psychology (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche) and the barbarism which ensued? The tone in which he poses the question is, too often, one of vulgar simplification and philippic. The question, however, is fundamental. More damaging to Lukács's stature as a literary critic-historian is the omission from his theory and readings of the novels of Proust, of Joyce, of Kafka. The doctrinal reasons for this omission, the lacunae of sensibility which it reveals, are not difficult to place. But the diminution of responsible perception is, no less than in the strangely parallel case of F. R. Leavis's defensive parochialism, drastic.

The final phase was taken up by "more serious matters". It saw the production of the voluminous, although incomplete, *Ästhetik*, and of the *Ontologie*, a massive torso of which much has appeared posthumously. To the latter Lukács attached supreme significance. With an explicit ontological foundation, Marxist interpretations of history, of literature, of man's activities of consciousness, would remain vulnerable to contingency and tactical misuse. Lukács was intent on forging the autarkic essence of Marxism: "Menscheword der Menschheit als Inhalt des Geschichtsprozesses, der sich - sehr variierend - in jedem einzelnen menschlichen Lebenslauf verwirklicht. So ist jeder Einzel-mensch - einerseits, mit wieweit Bewusstheit - aktiver Faktor im [des] Gesamtprozesses, dessen Produkt er zugleich ist." ("The humanization of man as the content of the process of history which - very variously - is realized in the course of every human life. Thus, every individual - no matter how consciously - is an active ingredient in this total historical process, of which he is at the same time that Lukács's late, systematic tra-ces, contribute very much to the exposition, let alone fulfillment, of this ideal of "man's becoming man", of the dialectical reciprocity which Lukács proclaimed as functional between the individuality of each human person and the "collective", totalizing process" (where *Prozess* also means trial") of history. But I may well be wrong, and the *Ontologie*, with its, perhaps, unconscious attempts at "counter-echoing" the detested Heidegger, will need to be valued.

One's sense of the core of Lukács, as it comes through also in the fascinating gallery of the photographs

taken of him just before his death, is compactly summarized in a recent book by his interviewers. He attributes his personal survival to the NKVD purges to the fact that he found his quarters so wretched as to make seizure unprofitable. Should we coil from so abjectly opportunistic and cynical a causality? Not at all. The conduct of the Stalinsky trials was an "objective" reflection and response to the inevitable crisis in Soviet cities at that moment. One can hear Lukács saying this.

There is to Lukács's life and work a primary creative "duplication". Brought up in a household of great wealth and Central European culture, he assumed, as a matter of course, that the values to be realized by man and society are those of the spirit, of the thinking intellect. Consciously or not, he laboured throughout his whole existence to secure these essentially conservative ideals to make the world not only "safe for", but actively answerable to Goethe, Pushkin, Balzac or Thomas Mann. He sensed, long before others, that the ultimate threat to such aims stemmed from what he knew or imagined to be "America", the mass-consumer utopia of maintenance. Even the Gulag (this is evident in Lukács's beautifully receptive monograph on the early Solidarity) is less of a peril to the life of the spirit than is the detergent life of "Americanism" - and all technocratic-capitalism must strive to become "America".

In the "Americas" of the West, there are no necessary bonds between the activities of the spirit and the political and market-forces on the other. To Lukács, the Western intellectual was a more or less privileged, a more or less depicted, parasite and entertainer. For all its ambiguities, for all its compromises and even humiliations - the famous self-criticism in regard to *History and Class-Consciousness* - Lukács's personal life and the books he thought and wrote, had gone hand in hand with historical reality. They mattered intensely. The phrase which he used to characterize what he foresaw as the condition of *don, littérature* was "the condition of *don, littérature* was *die behagliche Leerlauf*". Again, we have a problem of translation. *Leerlauf* refers to a wheel spinning empty because it has no purchase on matter, because it is a mechanism in a vacuum. "A comfortable, coasted emptiness." If Lukács was mistaken, many of us may still have to prove him so.

## HISTORY

## 'The Jesus dynasty'

By Jonathan Sumption

MICHAEL BAIGENT, RICHARD LEIGH and HENRY LINCOLN:  
*The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail*  
445pp. Cape, £8.95.  
0 224 01735 7

This rather silly book would not be worth noticing were it not for two factors which have nothing to do with its merits. One is that Henry Lincoln, the third-named author, has already embodied some of its ideas in three documentaries broadcast by the BBC. The other is that the public's consuming interest in secret societies and esoterica will ensure that it is widely read, however worthless.

The authors set out to explain the mysterious wealth of Bérenger Saunière, parish priest of Rennes-le-Château, a small village in the French foothills of the Pyrenees. Saunière, who lived in Rennes from 1885 until his death in 1917, is said to have discovered some coded documents in his church during a restoration in the 1890s and shortly afterwards to have acquired a great fortune from some mysterious source which he always refused to divulge. In France the mystery of Bérenger Saunière has produced a spate of books, half fact, half fiction. This one, however, purports to be wholly fact, the authors allowing only that a few "details here and there" may be "subject to modification" in the light of further research.

The assertion is that Jesus Christ was the bridegroom at the marriage feast of Cana, and that Mary Magdalen was his bride. Between them they had a number of children, including Barabbas. Jesus was not really crucified. His family bribed Pilate to stage a phoney crucifixion, there by enabling him to fulfil the Old Testament prophecies before quietly slipping off to the east, or perhaps going to ground in Palestine. Meanwhile, Mary Magdalen and Barabbas (or perhaps it was another son) took ship to Provence.

The authors thus adopt as fact the legend forged by the monks of Vézelay in the eleventh century to justify their claim to possess her relics. But there are interesting variants. In the authors' version the descendants of Jesus and Mary Magdalen became kings of an autonomous Jewish principality in southern France. In the fifth century, the authors suggest, the Jesus dynasty intermarried with the rulers of the Franks, with the result that the Merovingian dynasty had the blood of Jesus in their veins until Dagobert II, who was murdered with the Roman Emperor, was deposed. Dagobert's son, believed at the time to be dead, in fact survived to continue the line, and to this day his descendants are living comfortably in France in the knowledge that they are its rightful kings and successors of the Messiah.

The secret of Christ's descendants in France constituted the treasure of the Holy Grail. The authors "can only speculate" on the physical form of the Grail, but perhaps it consisted of "the equivalent, so to speak, of Jesus's marriage licence and/or the birth certificates of his children" or else, "something else of comparably explosive import". Whatever it was, the treasure was preserved in Jerusalem until the Roman Crusades, when Godfrey of Bouillon (himself a descendant of Jesus) went out to Jerusalem as its leader. There he founded the Order of the Temple, a precursor of the Templars, and after them the Order of the Grail, and with this object in view Bertrand de Blanchefort, Grand Master of the Temple, caused the Grail to be taken to France and buried in a specially excavated "hillside" near Rennes-le-Château.

In some obscure fashion the Albigensian heresy comes into all this. Perhaps the Albigensians had the Grail with them in the castle of Montségur, where they made their last stand in 1244. If so, they got it back to its hillside before the battle

finally fell. Thereafter it was guarded by the Templars and, when that order was dissolved, by the Order of the Grail, which continued to exist in secret under a succession of distinguished Grand Masters including René d'Anjou, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton, Victor Hugo, Claude Debussy, Jean Cocteau, Uncle Tom Cobley and so on.

All this is perfectly straightforward, and the question why it has not come out until now is easily answered. The authorities will stop at nothing to cover up the secret, especially the discreditable role of the Church in the murder of Dagobert II. The Order of the Grail itself is anxious to keep the secret until its time is come. For centuries one or other of them has censored the sources used by historians. They have bumped off the cognoscenti by throwing them from high-speed trains, and obstructed the researches of Messrs Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln by ensuring that when they want to read a book in the Bibliothèque Nationale their application form is mislaid or the book is on loan to another reader.

We have come some way from Bérenger Saunière. Indeed the authors are in some difficulty in bringing him back into the picture. The end of the book and must rest content with the dark suggestion that he got his money by blackmailing the Vatican with the threat to reveal the secret of the Grail. And why not?

The authors' researches have been guided by three principal canons of historical enquiry. The first of them is that there is more to everything than meets the eye. If somebody is somebody else's nephew or comes from the same part of Italy, or met him somewhere or other, here is a remarkable coincidence which cries out for an explanation. Somewhere there must be the seeds of a conspiracy. Secondly, if a hypothesis is possible (or, to use the authors' words "cannot be dismissed out of hand"), and if no other hypothesis can be devised which is consistent with it, then both hypotheses must be true. So, if there was a secret about Jesus's descendants in France, Bérenger Saunière might have discovered it, and he might have used it to blackmail the Vatican. Therefore there was such a secret and he did discover it and did blackmail the Vatican.

Thirdly, if there is no evidence for something, then it must be true, the evidence having evidently been suppressed. We are told, for example, that the Vatican was always afraid of Saunière, a circumstance clearly pointing to blackmail. The authority for the proposition is to be found in a note at the end of the book which explains that two searches of the Vatican archives have failed to reveal any mention of him whatever, which "suggests that all information regarding this priest has been extracted deliberately".

This being the basic approach it was perhaps unnecessary for the authors to cite (or indeed to have) any sources for their thesis. In fact, however, some thirty pages of references appear *ex abundanti cautela*. We have, in the first place, references to reputable sources which, on inspection, are found not to support the text. There is about one instance per page of this technique, so I shall content myself with a single example. The existence of the Order of the Grail in the twelfth century is said to be proved by original charters. The charters exist. But they refer to a community of Benedictine monks established on Mount Sion shortly after the First Crusade.

Other references are to genuine but disreputable sources, such as the epic poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and in particular the Grail legends of Wolfram von Eschenbach. The refusal of other historians to treat these legends as sources for historical events several centuries earlier is ignorantly dismissed as a professional pederasty on the basis that a literary myth can carry the reflection of real events through a millennium. It is rather like reconstructing the history of ab-

teenth-century England with the aid of Donizetti's operas.

These sources, however ingeniously used, would not lead the authors to their conclusions unless supplemented by copious references to the works of other nutters who themselves supply no references at all: privately printed esoterica published by obscure Masonic lodges, bogus genealogies prepared by pseudonymous researchers for armigerous chumps, compilations of arcane material with titles such as *Les Dossiers Secrets* which so far from being secret are deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale. It reminds one of nothing so much as Stephen Lescock's spy, with half a dozen secret badges pinned on the outside of his lapel.

Ultimately one falls back on the refrain which is heard throughout this work and others of its ilk. It cannot be proved to be wrong. This is true, but then as Bertrand Russell once observed in another context, we cannot prove that there is not between the earth and Mars a china teapot revolving in an elliptical orbit. The probabilities are not high enough for us to assume it, and perhaps it does not matter anyway.

THE ROAD TO THE HOLY GRAIL



The chalice of the blood of Christ, as depicted on the flag of the Christian rebels at Shinbura in Japan in 1637-38, now in the Okoyama Dinsl Collection: one of the 118 illustrations (15 in colour) in *The Grail: Quest for the eternal* by John Matthews (96pp. New York: Crossroad. £9.95. 0 8245 0035 0).

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## Healing the division

By Gabriel Josipovici

IDRIS PARRY:  
*Hand to Mouth*  
And other essays.  
173pp. Manchester: Carcanet New Press. £6.95.  
0 85635 275 2

What a pleasure to read a short, modest volume of essays and to know, when one has finished, that one will return to it many times in the future. Idris Parry has brought together a number of his recent radio talks and occasional pieces without making any large claims for their significance or utility, but such is the depth of his understanding of his chosen topics, and so clearly does his deep imaginative response to art come through, that the book is not only a pleasure in itself, but a constant invitation to re-read some of the major authors of the last two hundred years.

With the exception of one on Sterne, the essays are all on German subjects, and the book includes Parry's lucid translation of one of the classics of Romanticism, Kleist's *Marriage of Figaro*. Parry's lucid translation of Kleist's *Marriage of Figaro* is a masterpiece of clarity and style. Parry's lucid translation of Kleist's *Marriage of Figaro* is a masterpiece of clarity and style. Parry's lucid translation of Kleist's *Marriage of Figaro* is a masterpiece of clarity and style.

than he explicitly says. It is his involvement with the individual problems of these writers that makes the universal issues stand out so clearly.

What Parry finds in Sterne he finds in all the writers he deals with: that the sense of relevance and importance we feel on reading them comes from an initial letting-go on their part, a refusal to allow the mind or the form to dictate; a willingness to let instinct take over, and thus an ability to write in a way which has analogies with nature and the continual metamorphoses rather than with art as it has been conceived since the Renaissance - as the imposition of form on nature.

In Sterne's digressive technique we see a perfect reflection of movement in nature. He starts, and then in the second sentence. What results depends on the first sentence, as the transformations of nature are always a development of what is already there. Creation in this novel and in nature is constant and versatile. Forms are generated by excitement caused through the friction of forces working on each other, surprising each other, but never letting go. They can't let go. Literature has its own conservation of energy.

But of course such openness has its dangers, both artistic and personal. One of Parry's most moving essays is the one devoted to Robert Walpole, the German-Swiss writer he loved of Kafka, who like Kafka set

out in his life and his art to make himself smaller than the small, humbler than the most humble, as unassertive as possible. Walpole, as *Jakob von Gunten*, concerns an academy for servants, but Parry shows that Walpole, uninterested in the comic or picaresque possibilities of this theme, uses it to reflect his own strongly held beliefs, which could be summed up thus: We have had enough of mastery, let us truly learn to be servants. Walpole deserves to be better known in this country. Walpole spent the last half of his life in mental homes. When a friend who was visiting him asked him whether he was writing at all he replied: "I am not here to write. I am here to be mad."

The other authors Parry deals with somehow managed to use their art as a way of keeping them out of the madhouse, and Parry's essay on Mann ends by quoting with approval the words Mann puts into Schiller's mouth and which are applicable to himself: "Not to descend into chaos; at least not to stay there! But to rise to the light out of chaos, which is fullness; whatever is able and ready to win form. Not to brood! Work! Define; eliminate, give form and completeness."

There are many ways of doing this, but Parry's essay on Mann and on Kafka does, and by trying to discover the rhythm which exists even in chaos, as Rilke does,

Three of the eleven essays in this book deal with Rilke, and the finest is perhaps Parry's discussion of the role of Rodin in Rilke's oeuvre. For from Rodin Rilke learned the importance of the simple daily task of making and letting the material guide the hand until the maker is himself so different from all other nature. This was Rilke's life-long project, and Parry brings out beautifully the depth of his commitment to it. The theme of the poem-as-sculpture, the idea of words as divisive but of the work of the hand as healing the division, is the central theme of the collection. It leads Parry back to the German rediscovery of Greek art and to the artist who is though no single way devoted to him: Goethe. There is no getting away from Goethe, for Parry as for Mann, but Parry is so much at ease with him, so familiar with him, one could say, that he comes through out as the distant, God-like, rather amusing figure so often presented to us, but as positively Shakespearean in his unassertive grasp of the unity of all things.

If I have one criticism to make of Parry's style and method it is that it is not critical enough. In a way, his criticism of a work or an author tends to reveal more about the subject, and the best essays have always been those devoted to artists whom Parry loves. But there is occasionally something a little bland about the mixed praise, something dis-

appointing about the too-indiscriminate use of examples: "like the Dadaists... like Moravia... like Anthony Powell..." The comparisons do not illuminate; instead, they blur the point that is being made. And there are crucial differences, too, between Sterne and his latter-day disciples, such as Grass and John Barth. These latch on to Sterne's virtuosity, his awareness of the artist's ultimate control over his subject-matter, but ignore the desperate sense of failure and loss which such an awareness brings with it. Since *Tristan Shandy*, only *Lolita*, and the works of Beckett, to my mind, have been able to capture the paradox: the more control the artist has over words the more conscious he must be that it is only by words that he has control. The final impression a novel by Grass (and even more by certain "American" so-called "experimentalists") leaves with the reader is of a hard carapace of self-confidence and even self-admiration, which, as in people, is not the most encouraging of traits.

But Parry himself certainly can't be accused of that. As acute in his insight as Erich Heller and George Steiner, he succeeds in making one feel, as they sometimes don't, that his eye is always on the object. At his best he is nearly always at his best in these essays; his prose is a transparent medium, and he achieves what must surely be the critic's ultimate aim: sending one back with renewed excitement to the book and authors about which he has chosen to speak.

كتاب في الأصل



# The image of the king

By G. R. Elton

CHARLES ROSS:

Richard III

265pp. Eyre Methuen, £9.95.  
0 413 29303 3

There are a good many royal mysteries in English history but none more surprising than the bitter battles waged over Richard III's reputation. Richard, Plantagenet, duke of Gloucester, who died before his thirty-third birthday, and on the throne for just over two years – the shortest reign so far of any king not a minor. He got there by usurpation, declaring either his predecessor (his brother) or that king's children illegitimate, and he unquestionably benefited from a number of convenient killings – opponents disposed of without the formality of trials. Even while he reigned he was thought to have had his nephews murdered in the Tower. On the other hand, he had earlier served his brother Edward IV faithfully enough, even though (as everybody was bound to do sooner or later) he had quarrelled with his other brother, George, Duke of Clarence. Clarence's murder offered one of several clear indications to him how power was to be won and preserved in the politics of the late fifteenth century. From the ruthless disposal of landed properties which the whole Yorkist dynasty practised with skill, he had gathered great wealth, but he gained some suspicion from the amount of it that he directed into institutions of piety and learning.

All that we know about Richard makes him a very conventional, representative operator of the day – quite competent at the political game, possessed of devious cunning, formally devout, and equipped with that streak of nakedly unscrupulous self-seeking which the collapse of royal authority in the reign of Henry VI had turned into an easy and rapid road to worldly success. As Charles Ross shows, in this excellent follow-up to his splendid biography of Edward IV, Richard III was neither especially admirable nor impressively evil. A brave but not very distinguished soldier, a reasonably faithful husband, a very devout politician, and a king without achievements, he stands there as a man some way from the first rank.

Why, then, should he of all people excite such passions? Why should he be chosen as ewe-lamb by the sort of people who commonly spend their ingenuity on finding some impossible author for Shakespeare's plays? The clue lies there: the Richard III of legend, the determined villain, was created by Shakespeare out of the dubious material supplied by Thomas More via the chronicler Edward Hall. Since there are those who cannot resist pulling Shakespeare down, and those who cannot resist pulling Shakespeare up, the question of the real Richard III is a mooted one. It is by what is known as Tudor propaganda.

If reason could end the nonsense, Professor Ross's book would do the

trick. Not only does he carefully review the tangled historiography of his theme in a brilliantly impartial opening chapter, but the picture he builds up from the real evidence leaves the Friends of Richard III (incorporated or limited) with not a sparrow's leg to stand on. Perhaps it is a pity that even Ross uses phrases about Tudor propaganda which the uninitiated must suggest official sponsorship of the legend: as he makes quite plain, Richard's memory was blackened by private enterprise embroiling upon the undoubted villainies in which he got involved. He was not a nice man; if he had been, he would not have lasted five minutes in the politics of his day. But neither was he a devil from hell, nor even cmok-backed. Rather ordinary, in fact, and undistinguished, though to his power-hunger dangerous.

Ross analyses well Richard's chief source of power as weakness – the complex dynastic relationships and manoeuvres of the upper landed classes to which he belonged. The analysis, of necessity rather laboured, was well worth doing because it supplies the real world in which Richard had to operate. Like Edward, he built his strength on faction. In his case supplied by the powerful northern alliance which he created. Most useful to a usurper, this became a notable handicap to a king. Richard got his chance because Edward IV left behind a divided Yorkist faction, but it was his perfect necessary loyalty to those northern followers (who under him got in everywhere) that alienated enough support elsewhere to encourage Henry Tudor in his ultimately

successful efforts to dislodge the Yorkist dynasty. Despite some opinion to the contrary, it seems to me that Yorkist failure ultimately derived from the dynasty's inability to free itself from dependence upon some sector of the political nobility. Neither Edward IV nor Richard III ever made himself, as Henry VII was to do, into a "national" king, standing above the factions. The political reality of the Yorkist reigns emerges in all that reckless and endless playing about with grants and resumptions, that welter of executions without form of law, and all of this ceased in 1485. Tudor monarchs rewarded loyalty and punished disobedience with a heavy and often ruthless hand, but the hand was non-partisan. Of course, they were assisted by the landed nobility's growing weariness, but also by their understanding that kingship could prosper only if it was

elevated above the ruck of aristocratic politics. Ross has written an effectively definitive book on Richard III, in whom he is as kind as justice will permit. He might have disposed of more categorically than he does of H. G. Hanbury's ridiculous postulate for Richard the great legislator (as Ross says) vastly overestimated the weight of the statutes passed in his only parliament but (as Ross does not say), quite without abilities, ascribes the legislative initiative to the king. So far as the evidence goes, Richard was no legislator and not much taken with the wealth. There are no signs that he would have become anything better if he had lived. The old saw has meaning: the White Boar really is a bit of a bore.

## Hammer for heretics

By Claire Cross

MARGARET BOWKER:

The Henrician Reformation  
The Diocese of Lincoln under John Longland 1521-1547  
229pp. Cambridge University Press  
0 521 23639 8

In this companion volume to *The Secular Clergy in the Diocese of Lincoln 1493-1520*, published in 1963, Margaret Bowker has brought her scholarly analysis of the see of Lincoln in the late Middle Ages to a logical conclusion on the death of Lincoln's last medieval bishop, which happened to coincide with that of the monarch to whom he had acted as confessor. Historians in previous generations, too conscious of England's destiny as a Protestant nation, have tended to come to the Henrician Reformation seeking signs of change and overlooking the evidence of religious conservatism. Here Mrs Bowker demonstrates the fresh light an approach from the medieval background can throw on the revolutionary events of the 1530s.

When John Longland attained the see of Lincoln in 1521, the last bishop to preside over a diocese which extended south from the Humber to the Thames, east from the archdeaconries of Leicester and Oxford to those of Huntingdon and Bedford, and which contained no less than 1,736 parishes, he accepted pastoral responsibility for a region which showed more indications of autumnal decay than of a second spring. Very much an Oxford theologian who had already made his mark as a court preacher, Longland undertook his episcopal duties in a spirit of cautious Catholic reform, and his new diocese provided him with many occasions for exercising his exhorting and somewhat repressive talents.

Some years before he rose to the episcopate, Longland had lectured the monks of Westminster on the observance of the rule of St. Benedict; his visitations of monastic houses in the diocese of Lincoln further strengthened his concern at the failure of early sixteenth-century monasteries to hold their founders' ideals. More than half of the forty-eight monasteries inspected revealed serious faults, ranging from a lack of vocations, as at Avinghoe which could muster a mere four nuns, to the undoubtedly serious Augustinian priory of St Mary in the Meadows, where, under a lax prior, the monks left the enclosure when they wished, ate at their pleasure, and kept wild geese and horses within the monastic confines. Institutions such as these proved to be beyond the bishop's powers to reform.

As a hammer of the heretics, however, Longland gained more success. Directing his attention to the "Children" where Lollardy had entrenched itself, the bishop, by his heresy hunts, appears to have driven the local

population into outward conformity in the University of Oxford, of which he became chancellor on William's death in 1532, he also (at least until 1530s) seems to have been effective in curbing the dissemination of Protestantism, intervening with an obvious sense of urgency to crush an outbreak of Lutheranism at Wolsley's new college in the early months of 1528.

In contrast with his personal involvement with monastic reform and the extirpation of heresy, Longland normally delegated his parochial oversight to deputies. Despite this, most of the very numerous parishes were reasonably served by their incumbents, a third of whom lived in their parishes, and just over a third of whom were graduates, though these graduate priests were usually the ones who did not reside. Those who actually undertook the care of souls may well have received only a basic education, but they seem to have been ministering sacraments adequately and generally to have been regarded as satisfactory by their congregations. Anticlericalism seems to have been minimal.

The acts of the Reformation Parliament in consequence descended upon a diocese quite unprepared for drastic change. Longland himself supported the divorce and the royal supremacy but continued profoundly conservative in theology. Henry VIII solved his problem of uncommitted religious by dissolving all monastic houses, whether zealous or not. The supreme head of the church also somewhat alleviated the bishop's difficulties in supervising so immense a diocese by dividing it into two new sees of Peterborough and Oxford. By a skilful use of patronage and by his adamant refusal to allow Protestant preaching within the diocese, Longland met the very end of his life convinced to curb the spread of heresy. Only at the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace, when in part of Lincolnshire priests and people combined against what they saw as the unjustifiable intrusion of both monarch and bishop, does Longland's touch seem momentarily to have faltered.

This temperate and meticulous study, beautifully presented by the Cambridge University Press, like other recent diocesan histories amplifies the conservatism of the see of Lincoln, which could in no sense be said to have adopted Protestantism by the time of the death of Henry VIII. Indirectly it confirms the importance of the royal supremacy in English sixteenth-century religious history: bad Henry VIII not been followed by a Protestant son and he, after the Catholic restoration of Mary, by another Protestant monarch, then England might well never have left the Catholic fold.

Now new investigations are needed: much of an urban or deanery, as at a diocesan level, into those areas where Protestantism was being propagated in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII and that of Edward VI, which help to explain how an England almost universally Catholic in 1529 had been transformed by Elizabeth's death into an emphatically Protestant country.

# The Elizabethan Cold War

By Patrick Collinson

WALLACE T. MACCAFFREY:

Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588  
530pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £28.20 (paperback, £10.80).  
0 691 05324 3

There has never been a better time than the 1970s and early 1980s to savour the international politics of the equivalent decades of the sixteenth century, an age when, as J. H. Elliott has observed, the powers of Europe were willing enough to wound but mortally afraid to strike. To call the Netherlands Philip II's Vietnam is an inescapable cliché. Wars by proxy, responses to revolutions and counter-revolutions aroused by ideological sympathy or mere self-preservation, were the order of the day. And the cause, then as now, was a deterrent, powerful if less than ultimate: the unacceptable cost, financial and political, of open and unrestrained warfare, which imposed a high degree of deviance on the conduct of international and interdynastic affairs.

When Queen Elizabeth refused further aid and comfort to the Dutch Sea Beggars in 1572, that she intended as a friendly gesture towards the king of Spain or not? Its immediate consequence was the seizure of the port of Brill by the rebels, its more remote result the prosecution of an eighty-year war against the Spaniards and the eventual emergence of an independent Dutch republic. The Armada was already approaching the Channel in the summer of 1588 as English and Spanish commissioners sat around a table, ostensibly to negotiate a truce and even a treaty of peace. The historian who asks whether Elizabeth and the duke of Parma were in earnest in these transactions may wonder whether he betrays his naïveté by even posing such a question.

Compared with our own experience, the politics of the later sixteenth century were even less predictable in their course and more unsteady in their conduct. The fabric was looser, communications were unsatisfactory, the notion of public service and responsibility was less clear-cut, dependence upon the vagaries of personality more absolute. It is necessary to forget modern political science in order to understand the career of a figure like François Hercule de Valois, duke of Anjou, Anjou was the brother of the king of France and heir to the French throne. But when he was engaged to play a role in the Netherlands by the representatives of the seven provinces which composed this troubled region, it was unclear what that role was to consist of, and uncertain whether it would be undertaken in the interest of the French crown, or of the States (themselves in great distress), or in

collusion with the viceroy of the king of Spain, who still claimed sovereignty, or as proved to be the case, in pursuit of private ambitions.

Why mention "this odd fellow" (as a contemporary English writer calls him) in connection with the foreign policy of Queen Elizabeth? Because it seems to me that this virgin sovereign in her forty-sixth year, the security and future prosperity of her realm depended absolutely upon her marrying Anjou, or at the very least engaging with him, placing all her eggs in this improbable but, as it presently appeared, thoroughly rotten basket. Simultaneously in Scotland a stable government favourable to English interests was overthrown upon the arrival of another French adventurer, Esmé Stuart, duc d'Angoulême, cousin and first of several worthless favourites of the twelve-year-old James VI. This was how the world appeared from England, in about 1582.

The subject of Wallace T. MacCaffrey's new book, which provides a sequel to *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime* (1968), is the progressive hotting up of the Elizabethan Cold War, stopping just short of the cleansing and resolving confrontation of 1588. Three hundred of its 500 pages concern foreign policy, and within this major section attention rarely wanders from the central preoccupation of the Netherlands. The only aspects of domestic politics extensively discussed are those bearing most directly upon policy in this sense: of religion, which dominates the first section of the book, "The Domestic Scene"; to the exclusion of all other topics; and the institutional and human aspects of the formation and criticism of policy, in Court, Council and Parliament. It would be profitable to blame Professor MacCaffrey for failing to write some other kind of book, dealing, for example, with Elizabethan social or commercial policy. What he has given us is the most intelligent and enlightening account yet written of the English involvement in events which, for all their apparent confusion and even irrationality, determined the long-term future of North-West Europe.

His book is also a fine example of what may be called the historian's etiquette: which consists of standing helpfully and discreetly beside the reader rather than obstructing his view of the subject. MacCaffrey is a more active and critical interpreter of the diplomatic sources than Coopers Read to his monumental studies of Walsingham and Burghley. But on the other hand, he eschews the indignant polemics of Charles Wilson, whose indictment of English policy in *Queen Elizabeth and the Revolt of the Netherlands* (1970) was extreme in the polemic literature. MacCaffrey's judgment is as dispassionate as his style is elegant. As we know from his earlier writings, his admiration for Elizabeth I is

tempered by recognition of her insouciant and incurable conservatism, arising, as he believes, from a singular lack of ideals or even conventional royal ambitions; and by his lively sense of what he calls her "wayward temperament". And if, on this occasion, he draws attention to the unwanted resolve which the Queen brought to the direction of affairs around 1580, the years dominated by Anjou, it is only to find that the diplomacy of this period was "fundamentally misconceived". When war came at last, it was under the most unfavourable circumstances which could have been contrived. But unlike Wilson, MacCaffrey never loses sight of the fearful odds against which any English policy towards the Netherlands, and above all a forceful, courageous policy, would have had to contend. "England could not risk open war with Spain on behalf of an ally which might at any moment cease to exist." Perhaps because of Vietnam, he is less ready than Wilson to indulge in pipe-dreams about lost opportunities: a united Dutch state gleefully indebted to its English godmother, a *pax Batavica* in North-West Europe, no Blenheim, no Waterloo and, without Wilson's expectations, he is more ready to believe that the historian encounters in the state papers, and even in Burghley's irritatingly Delphic memoranda, is something rational which it may not be altogether absurd to call a policy: albeit a largely reactive policy.

But who made that policy? MacCaffrey's title may suggest a thorough if not conclusive attack on this most recalcitrant but rewarding problem in Elizabethan history. However, one comes to the end of a long book feeling that the author has expressed what we already knew supremely well but has scarcely added to our knowledge. Wilson has written: "By English policy we mean the Queen's policy." The Council might propose, the Queen dispose; MacCaffrey endorses the analysis. "Every move in the complex interplay of events was hers." At each stage the architect of policy was unmistakably the Queen. If policy means decisions transmitted and implemented, it is impossible to quarrel with these statements, which – applied to the operations of the Tudor monarchy – amount to a truism. But they tell us little about the making of policy, in the sense either of policy executed or of policy proposed but subsequently rejected, perhaps tacitly, by inaction. In September 1571, a correspondent of the English ambassador in the Low Countries reported that the earl of Leicester was to come over with an army, to the aid of the States: "This is his full determination, but yet unknown unto her Highness."

The course of events, and the Queen's response to events, determined that there should be no expeditionary force, at least not for

another eight years, when Leicester set sail in altogether different and less favourable circumstances. Yet the implication that such momentous plans might be laid while "yet unknown unto her Highness" sends us with particular interest to MacCaffrey's penultimate chapter on "The Politicians". How far were they the policy makers? But what we find in this account of the leading members of the régime is familiar, even predictable. There were four Elizabethan Privy Counsellors who can fairly be called politicians: Burghley, Leicester, Walsingham and Hatton. Walsingham was a wholehearted ideologue. Hatton was his antitype, talented but uncluttered by high principle. Burghley was the dynmno who kept the business of government running smoothly and effectively, but not to what he thought about policy, he remains a noncommittal figure.

That leaves Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. MacCaffrey's earlier study traced the transformation of the mere favourite, the "joker in the pack", into a statesman of substance. There was some expectation that the rehabilitation of the earl, a greatly underestimated figure, would be a major theme of this second volume, which covers the years of Leicester's maturity and maximum authority. In the event we find less than ten pages devoted specifically to Leicester's reputation and qualities. Here he is called, as Conyers Read or even Sir John Neale would never have called him, "the most esduous" (as well as "restless") of Elizabethan politicians. His importance, here and elsewhere in the book, is seen to reside in his patronage of the committed, even radical Protestant/Puritan tendency. "He comes closer to something resembling a party leader than any other Elizabethan politician. Even his failure in the Netherlands is seen as in some ways pardonable: a far cry from Wilson's denunciation of Leicester as representing 'all that was worst in the politics and culture of the English Renaissance'."

But the hidden implications of Leicester's role in the Elizabethan political scene, and specifically in the formation of policy, are only lightly touched upon. This may be because MacCaffrey devotes more space to Leicester's patronage of Puritan clerics than to his political activities, and since he tends to identify Puritanism with "left-wing" opposition, rather than with the forward thrust of militant Protestantism (expressed, for example, in the fiercely anti-Catholic literary prefaces addressed to the earl) this suggests a wasteful dissipation of Leicester's powers and opportunities.

By contrast, the extraordinary predominance among middle-rank diplomats of zealous Protestants related to the Leicester-Walsingham axis is a fact mentioned but not explored, while the axis itself is assumed as an elemental feature of Elizabethan political life but not much investigated.



A portrait of Eleanor of Toledo, a painting from the sixteenth-century Florentine school of Alessandro Allori. She was offered for sale by Christie's, 502 Park Avenue, New York, on January 19.

MacCaffrey's final chapter on Parliament is a brilliant and suggestive essay on the political maturation of the Elizabethan House of Commons, building upon Neale rather than on the recent and continuing work of revision undertaken by G. R. Elton and his pupils, but sharing some Eltonian insights. It is here that we glimpse, almost for the first time in the book, the possible extent of the submerged iceberg which the very caution of MacCaffrey's scholarship has so often skirted around in earlier chapters. For Elizabethan policy was, after all, a topic of "wide public concern", of interest to a "formed public opinion", and, in the 1580s, the parliamentary oratory of ministers like Hatton and Midway was a frank recognition of that fact. There are also strong hints of the possibility that Commons initiatives on matters of public concern were not so much expressions of spontaneous and almost irresponsible "opposition" as viable tokens of contention throughout the political culture, running both to and from the Court and the Council. MacCaffrey draws attention to fruitful cooperation on somewhat equal terms between councillors and parliament men: "collaborative rather than manipulative strategies". And in an earlier chapter, on the Anjou marriage negotiations, he finds at least one example of that collaboration working to the frustration of the Queen's evident intent to make an unpopular marriage. "The shipwreck of the Queen's matrimonial plans illuminated the limits of her power within her own realm."

Professor MacCaffrey has written a masterly account of the unfolding of mid-Elizabethan policy. But it remains to some future historian, more adventurous and speculative, to penetrate, if he can, a little deeper into the folds of what he himself calls "the winding intricacies of Elizabethan policy-making".

## County people

By Edward Miller

NIGEL SAUL:

Knight and Esquires  
The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century  
316pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £17.50.  
0 19 821883 4

It is two centuries since Edmund Burke spoke revealingly of "our neighbourhoods and our habitual provincial connections". "These," he said, "are ins and resting places. Such divisions of our country have been formed by habit, and not by a sudden jerk of authority." Among these provincial connections the English gentry must take pride of place each of them over many generations the focus of a local government system common to all England and yet differing subtly from county to county. They owed something to "jerks of authority", for they were in essence the remarkably enduring heritage (only recently jettisoned in part) left by the tenth-century West Saxon kings of England. During the ensuing generations, however, they were indeed "formed by habit" into communities which carried duties and obligations, certainly, but which were also capable of giving expression to the interests and aspirations of their members. Further, if the shires provided the framework for local society, a very special part was played in their management by the local landowning classes which, at least from Tudor times, may be competently described as the "gentry". The association, on the other hand, was itself, in line with an older tradition, it is already to be discerned in the duties shouldered by "knights and landed men" in the thirteenth-century context, and perhaps as Sir Frank Stenton suggested, it was rooted ultimately in the Old English order under which the pattern of shires itself was established.

The character and operations of the local ruling class from Tudor times onwards have attracted a good deal of attention on the part of historians, but the Middle Ages are another matter. If only because evidence throws light on the private

(as distinct from some aspects of the public) concerns of gentlemen only rarely survives and sources revealing their thoughts and attitudes are even rarer. Nigel Saul's *Knight and Esquires* does show, however, how much can be made of the fragments of information which have survived from fourteenth-century Gloucestershire. His findings will need to be checked against future studies of other medieval county societies and, if this leads to a conclusion that what he has found in Gloucestershire had a general application, then the importance of his pioneering investigation will be all the greater. As it is there is an evident compatibility between the more general conclusions and the more detailed studies of parliament and the local communities being undertaken by scholars like G. L. Harriss and J. R. Maddicott. In this respect Dr Saul has contributed to a revision of English medieval history which is in progress.

Central to his argument is the contention that the fourteenth century was a key period both in the evolution of the county community and of its ruling elite. On the one hand it was a century of war, imposing intensified military and other demands upon the classes which provided both "fighting knights" and local government. It was, at the same time, a period of definition for this elite. During the fourteenth century the esquires, and soon after its end those lesser landowners increasingly coming to be described as gentlemen, came to be grouped together with the knights as gentry born, an entitled to a coat of arms, and at the same time as distinguishable from the nobility which was more and more defined as the parliamentary peerage. It is this new grouping in county society which may collectively be described by the term "gentry", and it is Saul's further contention that during the fourteenth century it came to monopolize the government of the county.

This ruling group of county, included many who had the blinding need to members of the nobility, but such they almost all resided in the shire, and many married within the shire and even found good lordship at the hands of a local magnate. The shire became ever more intimately

their shire, their *parish*, a development contributing to a transformation of the political structure of the county at large. The county court – the place "where knights of the shire were elected, royal proclamations were read out, criticisms heard and grievances aired" – advanced as a local political assembly while it deformed as a court of law. These courts chafed at taking place in the commons House in parliament.

So far as the evidence serves, moreover, Saul gives these political and social changes a human face. The Berkeley, as the local magnates, often dominate the scene; but we also encounter the second Sir Peter le Veil, a soldier-retainer of the Black Prince over a thirty years, whose role in the local government of Gloucestershire really began when his fighting days were drawing to a close. William of Cheltenham was a very different figure. A new man, he owed much to the patronage of the Berkeleys, whose steward he was; but he was also knight to the shire, a keeper of the peace, a justice of labourers, a case administrator skills rather than military prowess served to elevate him to gentry rank.

Naturally, however, not everything we know about Gloucestershire knights and esquires was estimable. Disputes over property bred feuds and, given the law's delays and the technicalities, feuding might break out into violence. For some gentle men violence even became a way of life conducted by gangs recruited from family, tenants and servants. Thus the tales that are told of Malcolm Musard of Salisbury, of James Clifford of Frampton, of the Kingcotes of Kingscote and of the Greyndoun of the Forest of Dean are all too similar to those related of the Poitvilles of contemporary Leicester-shire. One need not suppose that the conduct of the criminal gentry was typical of their class as a whole; all the same the crimes laid at the door of James Clifford did not prevent him being returned as an MP for Gloucestershire or engaged as a treasurer both by Richard II and by Henry IV. It is a further merit of Dr Saul's book that his knights and esquires are portrayed with all

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So far as the evidence serves, moreover, Saul gives these political and social changes a human face. The Berkeley, as the local magnates, often dominate the scene; but we also encounter the second Sir Peter le Veil, a soldier-retainer of the Black Prince over a thirty years, whose role in the local government of Gloucestershire really began when his fighting days were drawing to a close. William of Cheltenham was a very different figure. A new man, he owed much to the patronage of the Berkeleys, whose steward he was; but he was also knight to the shire, a keeper of the peace, a justice of labourers, a case administrator skills rather than military prowess served to elevate him to gentry rank.

Naturally, however, not everything we know about Gloucestershire knights and esquires was estimable. Disputes over property bred feuds and, given the law's delays and the technicalities, feuding might break out into violence. For some gentle men violence even became a way of life conducted by gangs recruited from family, tenants and servants. Thus the tales that are told of Malcolm Musard of Salisbury, of James Clifford of Frampton, of the Kingcotes of Kingscote and of the Greyndoun of the Forest of Dean are all too similar to those related of the Poitvilles of contemporary Leicester-shire. One need not suppose that the conduct of the criminal gentry was typical of their class as a whole; all the same the crimes laid at the door of James Clifford did not prevent him being returned as an MP for Gloucestershire or engaged as a treasurer both by Richard II and by Henry IV. It is a further merit of Dr Saul's book that his knights and esquires are portrayed with all

their shire, their *parish*, a development contributing to a transformation of the political structure of the county at large. The county court – the place "where knights of the shire were elected, royal proclamations were read out, criticisms heard and grievances aired" – advanced as a local political assembly while it deformed as a court of law. These courts chafed at taking place in the commons House in parliament.

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Yale University Press  
1 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DP



# The capital per caput

By Valerie Pearl

ROGER FINLAY:  
Population and Metropolis:  
The Demography of London 1580-1650  
188pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£22.50.  
0 521 22535 3

There are many unsettled problems about the population of London in its "take-off" period, during which, in an exceptional burst between 1580 and 1650, the number of inhabitants more than doubled in just over two generations. There is no way of knowing the precise figures, of course, nor do we fully understand the reasons for this phenomenal expansion. Reliable answers, if they could be given, would illuminate not only our knowledge of the metropolis but much of the history of the country, upon which the capital exercised great influence.

London is exceptionally rich in the extent of its surviving documentary records. Nevertheless, we lack adequate sources for estimating with accuracy the population of the city and its suburbs before the eighteenth century, and even for that century we have to be content with insufficient evidence until the first census was taken in 1801. Population figures have had to be constructed, sometimes highly speculatively, from partial formulae and model life-tables derived from nineteenth and twentieth century vital statistics, and have found justification in verification by comparison with statistical data derived for the populations of other large European cities.

The problems which face the would-be historical demographer of late sixteenth-century London are especially formidable. How can we calculate the birth and death rates and thus the size of the population from imprecise records; how reliable and complete are the bills of mortality, the parish registers and the occasional listings of inhabitants, from all of which demographers have learnt how to "reconstitute" families through a number of successive generations; what calculations can be made for the even more poorly recorded suburbs, widely believed to be growing faster than the centre; how to estimate the size and composition of the body of migrants from the countryside and other towns which the author of this book thinks replenished and augmented the population decisively; how big were the apprentice and other unmarried adult male sectors of London's population and what were the ratio of men to women and the average age of marriage for the two sexes; how high were marital fertility, illegitimacy and infant mortality; what proportion of infants was sent to nurse both within the city and in the country, and how did this practice affect mortality and birth rates; what differences of wealth existed between Londoners; in various parishes and how did social and economic class affect life expectancy?

To none of these questions can truly confident, unequivocal answers be given, and sometimes, it must be admitted, imagination is decked out in scientific dress. Quantification, where it is attempted, needs to be hedged around with qualification. Yet within such constraints historical demographers have done much in recent years to elicit the size and growth of rural populations, are turning their attention to the populations of the large towns and cities. Roger Finlay's *Population and Metropolis* is an important contribution to that debate. He has analysed the internal demography of London for a period of chosen mainly because eighteenth-century parishes have records suitable for his purpose, only from around that year to the middle of the seventeenth century, when the growth of London's population was rapid and the city's mortality and the upheavals caused by the Civil War all contributed to a

decline in the quality of data from which reliable statistical conclusions can be drawn. Amid much speculation, rough figures for the overall population now find wide acceptance, subject to where the boundaries of London are drawn. In the early seventeenth century, the number of inhabitants in the greater area is believed according to the best estimates, to have doubled from just below 200,000 in 1600 to nearly 400,000 by 1650. It is also widely accepted that this remarkable expansion was made possible by continuous and massive migration to the capital, although a more refined version, not fully discussed by Finlay, challenges the assumption that the city was an infernally unhealthy place where, to quote Finlay, "the birth rate could not keep pace with the death rate and migration prevented the population from falling".

Finlay's short book has over one hundred tables and graphs, but he admits to its somewhat limited nature and makes modest claims for it on the whole, although one cavils at the opening sentence that "this is the first study of the population of London during the early modern period", a few pages further on he himself pays tribute to the work of John Graunt, the father of all London demographers, whose pioneering book was first published in 1662 and raised many of the problems discussed here. The period covered by Finlay is short, only a small sample of parish registers was studied and although these included both very rich and very poor districts it was found that their social composition was more varied than "such generalizations might suggest"; moreover,

the sample did not include any of the suburbs and Finlay suggests (without giving any evidence) that the "demographic experience of the suburbs lay between the extremes of fertility and mortality" reported for the sampled parishes from the inner city.

Despite the interim nature of his findings, some valuable conclusions emerge. The accuracy of the eight London parish registers chosen as a sample is apparently of a high standard, and an important concomitant to this is the relatively high degree of persistence of residence, defined as the proportion of the population that stayed in the same parish for ten years, thus giving greater credibility both to the reconstruction of London families and to the belief that the stability of the city's population has been underestimated. In a chapter on the general growth of the population Finlay gives two especially important causes for its fast acceleration at the beginning of the period. First was London's unique position among the country's larger towns, in marked contrast, by 1750, the number of these had grown sufficiently for there to be far more possible destinations for migrants. Second, the growth of population in London was related to changes in the economic of the whole country, the capital depending upon a regular supply of migrants even to maintain its size.

Turning to London's social structure, Finlay bases an analysis of the distribution of wealth in his eight parishes on a listing of tithepayers made in 1638, which is tested for accuracy by comparing it with other surveys made by vestrymen and

churchwardens and with the reconstructed heads of families taken from the parish registers. About one-third of the 1638 tithepayers were not in the parish registers, which he thinks may be attributable to childless couples who could not be reconstructed by him (though so large a percentage of infertile marriages would surely have had a most marked effect on the very high birth rate) or it may show, Finlay reflects, "the fluidity of London society", a conclusion which appears to contradict his earlier verdict on its stability. In summing up his findings on the distribution of wealth he writes that "although the social structure of London was complicated, with no simple connections between it and the spatial form of the city, people of similar means lived close to each other...". The wealthier Londoners tended to live in the centre of the city whilst the poor were more likely to occupy the peripheral areas around the walls and along the river-side. The residence of the majority... of intermediate means was less well defined.

Other questions discussed here relate to the impact of plague epidemics (held to have had no great effect on the surge of population); at child-care practices, in which the extent and effect of wet nursing is considered and not very convincingly quantified; the comparatively large apprentice body, thought to have reached 15 per cent of the population in the period in question and providing, by its system of long apprenticeships, the small cause for London's foreign community, whose

numbers tended to be much exaggerated by contemporaries; and a useful discussion of why some parts of London appeared to be healthier than others, although this cannot be taken as the river-side parishes drank Thames water while others did not, for from the late sixteenth century onwards two Thames engines piped river water under pressure to the rich and to the northern parishes around Cornhill.

There are only a few small errors of this kind in *Population and Metropolis* but they may serve to indicate that if good demographic history cannot be written without side-references, mathematical formulae, hypothetical life-tables and reconstructed families, neither can one afford to neglect more traditional studies. But the statistical method too requires care in asking the right questions. This work deserves to be regarded as a valuable contribution to the debate about London's population, but one of its central premises, which is that migration made good an otherwise declining population, leaves unexplored the composition of the migrants themselves, and such questions as how long they stayed in the city and at what periods. Can some be regarded as temporary and others as permanent residents, and what professions, occupations and rates of marriage, fertility and mortality should be assigned to them? More detailed investigation is called for also into another apparently fundamental premise - the inability of both natives and migrants to replace themselves. In the wealthy parishes, Finlay reports an astonishingly high age-specific marital fertility exceeding 500 live births per thousand women-years lived. Fertility rates as high as these have not been reported for English rural parishes. Mortality, it is also demonstrated, was low in these wealthy parishes. Finally, the assumption that natural increase was nowhere sufficient to increase the population needs deeper examination.

Even the Lords, however, sometimes deviated into "opposition". Religious conservatives, lay and episcopal, opposed the Edwardian prayer-books. The climax came, however, in Mary's reign, in 1554, when one of the Queen's leading ministers, William Paget, instigated successful opposition against the "parliamentary programme of the Lord Chancellor, Bishop Gardiner. All this, the Commons suggest, set a bad example to the Commons, which indulged in its own oppositional extravaganzas the following year. "The year 1555 marks the parliamentary nadir of the reign." The Lords carried the scars for some time, via a reduced share in initiating bills, and a lower success rate.

In "simple quantitative terms of productivity" the East German Volkshammer no doubt scores very high. But opposition could sometimes prevent, for instance, in forcing the abandonment of a treason charge against Bishop Tunstall. Parliament could not act in the national interest, when it prevented Mary's scheme to have her husband, King Philip, crowned as King of England, a ceremony which might have tempted him to claim the throne for himself on Mary's death. It is not clear where Graves stands on such issues. But the impotence shown by the "revisionists" for the Whiggish glorification of "opposition" leads to a view of English history which is as distorted, perhaps even more so, as that of their opponents: one in which dissent is merely factional, and the defence of traditional liberties a sham.

## POLITICS

# Democracy on the map

By Kenneth O. Morgan

MICHAEL KINNEAR:  
The British Voter  
An Atlas and Survey since 1885  
173pp. Baisford. £20.  
0 7134 3482 1

British political history has usually concerned maps rather than maps. Geographical techniques have been under-used as tools for research by students of the economic, social and demographic basis of British electoral behaviour. An exception, however, is the Canadian scholar Michael Kinnear's political atlas, *The British Voter*, which has been a useful aid for political historians and psephologists since it was first published in 1968.

The staple feature of the new edition remains a series of maps illustrating general election results since 1885. In addition, there are sections on the effects of the redistribution of constituencies in 1918, and on differential turnout in somewhat arbitrarily selected elections, on the varying fortunes of the local party machinery of the Liberals (Asquithian and Lloyd Georgian), Unionists and Labour in the light of the electoral upheavals associated with the Lloyd George coalition in 1918-22; on the distribution of mining and agricultural votes, on the middle-class electorate and on the extent of religious nonconformity in 1921; and on the national particularisms of Scotland and Wales. The incidental commentaries on each map, while

brief, are sometimes informative. The main new feature of this edition is section VI, which covers the general elections of 1970 to 1979, the referendum on the Common Market and on devolution in Scotland and Wales, together with Ulster Unionism and Scottish nationalism in the 1970s and the first elections to the European parliament in June 1979.

Most of the limitations of the first edition recur, undiminished and uncorrected. In particular, there is a quite excessive emphasis on the events of 1918-24, a unique phase of four-party politics on which Professor Kinnear's research has been almost exclusively based. Lloyd George, charismatic and hegemonic though he remains, is misleadingly dominant. The details of the activity of Lloyd George Liberal constituency parties in 1922-23, while fascinating to the enthusiast (of which the present reviewer is certainly one), are of very marginal relevance to a general survey such as this: in any case, since the details are drawn from the *Lloyd George Liberal Magazine* without reference to any other source, the material provided is of very questionable value.

The discussion of electoral data before and after 1918-24 is much less authoritative, and many errors still obtrude. The party schisms of 1886 and 1931 are covered far less rigorously or reliably than that of 1922 (where the information is not impeccable either). The handling of Labour politics prior to 1914, an egregious area in the first edition, remains extremely slipshod. Indeed, precisely what the author means by

"Labour" in the 1885-1914 period is unclear, since he seems not to understand the basic difference between "Lib-Lab" and LRC candidates. Thus in the 1885 election, the author lists five "Labour" MPs (all Lib-Lab - in fact, the correct total is eleven), but none whatsoever in 1886 or 1895. In 1892, Keir Hardie is bracketed with the Lib-Labs. Two "Labour" members pop up in Wales in 1901 (apparently these meant Keir Hardie in Merthyr Tydfil, a Socialist who was LRC-sponsored, and "Mabon" in the Rhondda, an old-fashioned Liberal miner whom Kinnear has ignored for the previous fifteen years). In 1906, both tables and maps merge the LRC and the Lib-Labs into the same total of 54. The unwary beginner would not gather that the miners were not affiliated to the Labour Party until three years later. Nor would the account of the two 1910 elections help, since the Labour Party totals in each case include Lib-Labs as well. Here the comments on the influence of social reform upon the working-class vote in 1910 are almost absurd. The whole thing is a great muddle. Indeed, the Labour Party is a field where Kinnear is distinctly shaky throughout, and where he has not corrected old mistakes, many of them quite elementary. As for the Liberals, they fare little better, since the total number of seats given for 1922 is incorrect, while the 1935 electoral map confuses the supporters of Samuel and the Welsh group of "Independents" who followed Lloyd George, an error perpetuated from the first edition.

The new section VI is distinctly

impressionistic in its comments on the politics of the 1970s, interesting though the maps themselves are. Among the errors, it ought to be noted that not every Liberal MP supported British membership of the EEC in 1975, while the fifty-per-cent rule in the 1979 devolution referendum is mis-stated. The notes and bibliography have not been updated with sufficient care and thoroughness. It is especially surprising, given the prominence of the 1918 redistribution of seats in this atlas, that several important articles in academic journals since 1976, dealing with the repercussions of the 1918 Reform Act, are omitted. Many major works covering recent electoral history that were published in the 1970s are also left out (Paul Addi-

son's *Road to 1945*, to take one of the more obvious examples). The author's overall view, in his introduction, that British scholars have neglected to show a close interest in the social background of electoral behaviour, a reasonable enough judgement in 1968, is distinctly less appropriate now. The student should handle this book with some care, therefore, and with constant reference to other, more authoritative works (for instance, F. W. S. Craig's books of electoral statistics). Nevertheless, the charm and clarity of the maps, and the data, lucidly assembled, survive in full. This book continues to be an attractive, if somewhat flawed, guide to the local and regional variations of British political experience in the democratic phase.



En route for Norwich in the general election campaign, Lloyd George stood on a pair of steps steadied by porters to address a crowd at Cambridge railway station, December 3, 1923.

## Power in proportion

By Ian Bradley

VERNON BOGDANOR:  
The People and the Party System  
The referendum and electoral reform in British politics  
284pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£20 (paperback, £6.95).  
0 521 24207

One of the most pleasing side-effects of the formation of the Social Democratic Party has been the renewal of interest at both the popular and academic level in political and constitutional theory. Serious political treatises by Shirley Williams and David Owen are prominently displayed on the shelves of W. H. Smith's. Mrs Williams's book even climbed into the best-seller lists for a time. Scarcely since the days of penny editions of the works of J. S. Mill can there have been such public appetite for the philosophical musings of politicians.

Vernon Bogdanor's splendid new book represents the scholarly end of the same phenomenon, although that should not deter the general reader, for it is written in an admirably clear and easy style. It also has more than usually strong topical interest. Dr Bogdanor, one of the many members of the Oxford PPE faculty who have "gone SDP" in 1981 (in his case coming over from the Conservatives rather than the more common Labour route), is acting as secretary to the joint SDP/Liberal commission recently set up to examine the whole question of reform of the constitution. While it would be wrong to take his remarks on the subject in this book as a manifesto for the Alliance, they do provide some clear pointers to the way that the commission is likely to be thinking.

In content and style, *The People and the Party System* far surpasses the generality of contemporary academic studies of politics and the constitution. It stands rather in that fine British tradition of constitutional history, of which the chief exemplars are A. V. Dicey and Walter Bagehot. There is something splendidly and refreshingly Victorian about Bogdanor's clarity, his wide and illuminating historical perspective, and

above all, his forceful and infectious enthusiasm.

His book is a plea for the wider use of the referendum and for the introduction of proportional representation. The case for both these reforms is based ultimately on the argument that they will diminish the sovereignty of party and increase the sovereignty of the individual elector. Although Bogdanor deploys the usual arguments about the unresponsive and adversarial character of the present constitutional set-up, it is on the Victorian Liberal principle of representative democracy as the self-government of individuals that he essentially rests his case.

Personally, while I am certain that the application of this principle must lead to advocacy of proportional representation, I am much less sure that it logically leads to a demand for more referenda. Bogdanor himself points out that historically in this country, far from being perceived as an instrument of popular sovereignty, the referendum has usually been taken up by reactionary politicians who saw it as a way of checking disagreeable and generally progressive legislation. Thus its most fervent advocates have been Liberals who opposed Home Rule, Conservatives who opposed tariff reform, Socialists who opposed the Common Market and devolution to Scotland and Wales, and, one might add, Environmental Secretaries opposed to high-spending local authorities.

Widespread recourse to referenda would, in fact, challenge the principle of representative democracy just as much as the devices of reselection and accountability of MPs and councillors to party members that the SDP find so offensive. Bogdanor admits that the value of the referendum is limited and that it could not do much to secure popular involvement in social and economic matters. That seems to leave only strictly constitutional, and perhaps moral issues, and even there, I wonder whether, with proportional representation, the use of referenda would in fact substantially increase the say and enhance the power of the individual elector in the way that he rightly wants to see happen.

The argument for proportional representation is much more convincing, indeed, I have seldom seen

it better put than in this book. Guided by his Victorian Liberal principles, Bogdanor comes down in favour of the single transferable vote because it represents the opinions of electors rather than the geographical community in which they happen to live, as in our present first-past-the-post or plurality system, or their party allegiance, as in the list system used in West Germany.

Bogdanor has a positively Millite enthusiasm for the educative effects which the introduction of the single transferable vote would have on the minds and independent spirits of the British electorate. One feels, in fact, that he only just falls short of accepting Thomas Hare's original conception of the STV as allowing individuals to choose their parliamentary representatives from any part of the country on the grounds that particular opinions could not conceivably be confined to specific geographical boundaries. He does not pursue this delightful notion, however, and contents himself with the more commonly accepted solution of multi-member constituencies.

If there is one argument against proportional representation that this book demolishes finally and utterly it is that old chestnut about severing the traditional links of the MP with his constituency. For a start, as Bogdanor points out, there is nothing very traditional about these. Until 1885 the basic unit of representation in the United Kingdom was the multi-member constituency with three or four MPs. He goes on to show how our present electoral system actually diminishes the representation of locality by encouraging parties to define political issues in broad class terms.

The reader of this book is left realizing that the only real argument against proportional representation is summed up in Peel's response when it was first suggested in Parliament in 1831: "it is an idea by which the country might have benefited but the Party not". The Liberals failed to introduce electoral reform when they were strong enough to do so because they saw it as not being in their party interest. Let us hope for all our sakes that the Social Democrats do not go the same way. If they find that the present system is quite capable of bringing them to power,

## Listing the lawmakers

By C. S. L. Davies

MICHAEL A. R. GRAVES:  
The House of Lords in the Parliaments of Edward VI and Mary I  
An Institutional Study  
321pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£22.50.  
0 521 23678 9

Rescuing the House of Lords from the neglect into which it has, allegedly, fallen at the hands of historians, ranks high on the agenda for the self-proclaimed school of "revisionists", of which Michael Graves is a vociferous proponent. His imagery is read, "in the mid-sixties" we unfurled; nevertheless, he proceeds, mixing his metaphors, "the early revisionists fired wide or short of the mark". Their target is the tradition, "handed down, like the keys of the Kingdom, from A. P. Pollard to Noelstein, Conyers Read and J. E. Neale". These scholars are accused of indulging in an "over-riding and wrong-headed concern with the politics of parliament", and especially with "opposition". The readiness to obstruct the royal will becomes a test generally indulged in. The Lords much less than the Commons, and the excited less interest among ambassadors and other commentators. His torians have therefore compounded their sin by developing a "Commons fixation". Renouncing the Whiggish temptation to heroic history, the revisionists insist that attention should be focused on how the two Houses dealt with their claimants, and that, in co-operating with that crown in

the making of legislation. In this context the Lords will receive "its just recognition". Distaste for the style of Mr Graves's polemic should not blind us to the essential truth of much of his case. The "grinding, tedious and enervating" involved in constructive legislation is important. We need to know much more about the origin of bills and the changes which those of them which became act underwent in the course of their passage. A thorough understanding of procedure is essential for the understanding of the story from rather paucity of evidence means that Graves has set himself an impossible task in studying the Lords as an institution of Edward VI and Mary. There was a well-established Lords Journal, much more informative than that of the Commons (which only begins in 1547). It indicates who was present at each sitting, and how individual peers voted on controversial issues. But the study of procedure depends on confronting the journal, and the original acts still surviving in the House of Lords Record Office, with the procedural commentaries of Elizabethan and Early Stuart writers; far enough in the circumstances, the Lords over a longer period would have been more valuable. Alternatively, Graves could have brought out the original contribution of the Lords by writing about Mid-Tudor Parliaments as such. As it is, he is in the odd position of arguing the particular contribution of one side of a partnership, without examining the partnership itself.

The case for the importance of the Lords in the legislative process is a strong one. What about any temporal peers and twenty-five bishops it was smaller, more cohesive than the Commons. Many of its members had direct experience of central government; inevitably, there was much more continuity of membership than in the lower house. The Lords had the benefit of high-powered legal advice, from judges, agents-at-law, and the law officers of the Crown, who sat on its committees and scrutinized bills. Over half the bills originally introduced in the Lords became law, compared to a quarter of those in the Commons. "The Lords' achievement can be spelt out in simple quantitative terms of productivity." Were Graves to examine some acts in detail, to try to determine, by instance, what differences were made by Lords' amendments, he might have been able to add a qualitative to his quantitative judgment.

Half of the book is devoted to membership, asking the questions traditionally asked of the Commons. We learn that in 1547, "17% of the temporal peers and 96% of the bishops (or 44% of the House) had attended institutions of higher learning." (The non-graduate element in the apocryphal turns out to be a case for clear than Graves allows.) Graves has high standards, and is disappointed in the Earl of Arundel, "than he spoke". Attendance records during the 1547 session, while the daily attendance averaged over 57 per cent. Most absenteeism was innocuous, though a number of lords went away as a discreet protest in Queen Mary's third year. The Crown was more concerned to have members attend (to strengthen the air of a united body) though it sometimes persuaded potential trouble-makers to stay away. Graves examines kinship lies between peers, and the funds to which they often led, but it is impossible to relate these to the particular stance taken by

individual peers in Parliament. This highlights another weakness. If it is impossible to study the Lords apart from the Commons, so it is artificial to study its peerage, most of whose members possessed substantial power and political influence, within a narrowly Parliamentary context alone.

Even the Lords, however, sometimes deviated into "opposition". Religious conservatives, lay and episcopal, opposed the Edwardian prayer-books. The climax came, however, in Mary's reign, in 1554, when one of the Queen's leading ministers, William Paget, instigated successful opposition against the "parliamentary programme of the Lord Chancellor, Bishop Gardiner. All this, the Commons suggest, set a bad example to the Commons, which indulged in its own oppositional extravaganzas the following year. "The year 1555 marks the parliamentary nadir of the reign." The Lords carried the scars for some time, via a reduced share in initiating bills, and a lower success rate.

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## Owen Chadwick

Winner of the Wolfson Literary Award for his lifetime's contribution to the study of history.

## The Popes and European Revolution

'This is an important and fascinating chapter of history and it is recounted by Owen Chadwick with great readability and almost impeccable scholarship.' *The Observer*.

'Most impressive and scholarly work.' *The Tablet*.

'The book is unique in its focus and method... No one else could have given us so marvellous a picture. Professor Chadwick's eye for significant detail is unerring, his enjoyment of a good story manifest, his knowledge, of primary and secondary sources unrivalled.' *The Times*.

'It has throughout a freshness, a vitality, indeed an enthusiasm, which make it a joy to read. The lives of ordinary people are used in a really creative way to show how things were moving.' *Church Times*.

£28 Oxford History of the Christian Church

Oxford University Press







for the acceptance of human limitation, and the denial of false dreams of perfectibility. But at the same time it is also seen more positively: as a refusal of selfishness, a loving acknowledgment of kinship and the provision. In "Je Suis Perdu", the protagonist, a thirty-eight-year-old American writer living for a year in Paris, falls into sudden depression. This depression occurs on the very day he finishes the book he's been working on all year; and it lifts that same afternoon, at the sight of his daughter in the Jardin du Luxembourg. But it does so in a way that puzzles and unsettles him:

He was wondering where his dark mood had gone. It was not just gone. He felt it had never been. And why had he lied to himself about this year? It had been a fine year. But still he kept thinking about how slow he had interrupted his mood. . . . He found that he wanted the mood of dependency to return, and he knew that it

wouldn't for a long while. He felt he had been cheated. But this was not a mood, it was only a thought. He felt a great loss - except he didn't really feel it, he only thought of it. And he felt, he knew that he had after all gotten to Paris too late. . . . after he had already established steady habits of work. . . . after he had acknowledged claims that others had on him. . . . after there were ideas and truths and work and people that he loved better even than himself.

The tone of this passage gives full voice to all that the protagonist has lost or resigned, even as it acknowledges the wisdom and virtue of his resignation; its doubleness reveals a deep maturity, and is characteristic both of the distinctive achievement of Taylor's fiction, and of the tradition from which it comes. Though Taylor's output is slight, and in some ways narrow, it places him in the first rank of living American writers.

## Words for the walking wounded

By Adam Mars-Jones

RAYMOND CARVER:  
What We Talk About When We Talk About Love  
199pp. Collins. £6.50.  
0 00 222624 3

Raymond Carver's new book contains seventeen stories, all brief (less than ten pages each on average) and all dealing with the walking wounded of American suburbia, those who are obscurely debased by broken marriage, accident, illness, bad bingo luck, flood and drink. His characters utter broken sentences and try to communicate their sense of loss, but articulateness is the first thing to go; expression brings them no relief.

To match his subjects Carver has devised a style of careful starkness and understatement, one which insists on its own neutrality and draws attention to its omissions. Description, character-drawing and plot-development are all foreshortened, and the stories conclude as often with depressive epiphanies as with more conventional resolutions. He is rewarded with a blurb which refers to "zero-degree stories", but things aren't really as terminally modern as that.

Minimalism, after all, is a style (as artificial in its way as Henry James's maximalism) and not the opposite of a style; No Comment is rightly always classified as a comment. So when in the title story a wife, having corrected her husband's misuse of the word "vessel" (to mean *feudal dependency*), misses it herself in identical fashion, we don't need to be nudged; and when her husband escapes this implied apology for her interference by tacitly adopting the correct word, he completes a delicate moral negotiation that doesn't need to be spelled out for our benefit. It seems to speak for itself.

That's the trick, though: to throw your voice so that it seems to be coming from the furniture, and Carver is an expert ventriloquist. The

artificial inhumanity he adopts enables him to sidle unnoticed into areas of feeling which he couldn't approach directly.

This is partly a matter of cultural fashion. Few people nowadays would respect a book which announced *I want you to care for life's losers. For the little guy. For all of us. I want to break your heart.* But by cultivating a bleakness of manner which gives a way at crucial moments to a rational sympathy, Carver can achieve all these effects without being seen to solicit them.

Minimalism is well suited to the short-story form, since everything is over before the diminishing returns show up; there is only a much mileage in the poetry of inarticulateness, and the day of the autistic three-decker novel is not yet. But even with a volume of stories, doubts creep in. The first few pieces seem thin and perfunctory, and there is a recurring pattern, in "Gazebo", "Sacks" and "The Calm", of endings which lurch suddenly sideways, moving off in a direction that seems almost random.

Perhaps there is a reason for this. Endings and titles are bound to be a problem for a writer like Carver, since readers and reviewers so habitually use them as keys to interpret everything else in a story. So he must make his endings enigmatic and even mildly surrealistic, and his titles for the most part oblique. Sometimes he over-compensates.

These reservations apply least to a run of five excellent stories in the middle of the book ("Tell The Women We're Going", "After The Denim", "So Much Water So Close To Home", "The Third Thing That Killed My Father Off", and "A Serious Talk"), where Carver really seems to hit his stride. The situations here are a little fuller and a little more conventional than elsewhere, so that Carver's restraint and scruple stand out all the more by contrast. "After The Denim", for instance, merely describes, with a characteristic neutral precision, a couple's evening out playing bridge. The story has two narrative surprises, first that the Peckers' marriage is a happy one,

and second that Edith Pecker is very ill. Both the characters are fully aware of these two facts; it is only the reader who is kept in ignorance, by a technique which withholds necessary information while seeming simply to reserve judgment.

The pathos of the story is enhanced by its being delayed and the reader is grateful for the few cues he is given. Carver's fiction, in fact, doesn't need to break the mould of the traditional story to achieve its effects. In the final analysis, he keeps more than he abandons.

In one story he even keeps a tone of voice which clashes with his preferred starkness; true, the narrator of "The Third Thing That Killed My Father Off" tells a tale of obsession, loss and disconnection, but he remains remarkably unaffected by it. "I'll tell you what did my father in," he begins, but having done so he ends by saying, "But as I said, Pearl Harbor and having to move back to his dad's place didn't do my dad one bit of good, either." This throwaway ending is the nearest Carver comes to exploring the comic potential of his material, and in a sense he is right to be wary of it. If any incident, properly considered, is a microcosm of defeat and loss, why insist on every moment of heart-break? If three things can kill your father off, why not three thousand or three million?

The stories in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* use a droll understatement to distance the reader and then suddenly involve him, after pretending not to mind one way or the other. This technique is best suited to conventional material; it can accommodate both the lurid and the quirky, and can make tired situations seem fresh and exciting. Elsewhere it can fall off into sentimentality (as in the title story) or, worse, sickness ("Popular Mechanics"). But in a handful of fine pieces Carver's coolness pays real dividends; his most impressive stories are as subtly rhetorical as they are shrewdly calculated, and none the worse for that.

## An terrific nice girl

By George Craig

PETER DE VRIES:  
Sauce for the Goose  
240pp. Gollancz. £6.95.  
0 575 03076 3

What monkey glands are supposed to do for ordinary people (and fictional characters), *The New Yorker* actually does for its regular contributors. This is Peter De Vries's twentieth novel and it might be his second or third. The boyish pleasure in playing and timing a good line, the lightly-worn fastidiousness about the chase, the casual and speech-habit, the easy cosmopolitanism that never quite makes his happy fascination with American ways, the simple good-humour that underlies the sophistication - they are all here again as if freshly discovered.

Immediately convinced by her school-friend Effie Sniffen's casual gibe that her legs are not her natural parents, Daisy Dobbin sits happily in Terre Haute, Indiana, spinning the tale of her "real" origins: she must, she puts it, be the abandoned offspring of a ball in France, knew at once the perfection of her passion and the hopelessness of their plight. Where, in France? At Domremy, Meanyville, miraculously relieved of worries about ecology contamination, she can now enjoy the serene she has: Dad "high up in pavings", Mom, the hammer of corporations neglectful of consumer interests, Daisy's mixture of credulity and reasonableness, romanticism and

verbal dexterity emerges strengthened from studies at an East Coast College and a stint as a columnist for a New York magazine. She is approached by Bobby Diesel (a college friend whose aggressively unfeminine dress and concerns earned her the nickname "the Lay Miserable"), who persuades her to work up a series of articles on "occupational sexual harassment" to New York offices. She accepts nervously and, after a false start, takes a lowly job on "Metropole" magazine. Here too "copy" is hard to come by; she has to go in for outright provocation (which earns her a nickname, Daisy May); then endures the whole sebum by felling in love with Dirk Dolfin, the Dutch tycoon who has acquired "Metropole", and finds that she has a rival in Effie Sniffen.

Daisy and the Diesel, Daisy and the Dolfin, Daisy and the Cause, Daisy and Effie, Daisy and Dad (and Mom); all these De Vries accounts for neatly enough at the level of plot, leaving himself free to get on with what he really wants to do - set up the exemplary Daisy so that she can act as a filter for the linguistic quirks of the others. Dirk, whose line in post-coital chat is the history of the Dutchness by grabbing at colloquialisms, Daisy is a terrific piece of fall. Effie's misadventures include persistent misquotation, in Diesel's editorial advice is to "write clean and lay it on the line". Mom faces a litigious neighbour with "You just don't want to take that final step into maturity, do you?" Even someone seen only for a moment, an elderly adobe of a down-without-civilization cult, will describe the dependence fostered by conventional

religion as an "umbilical cord". But to give examples at all is to mislead; page to page, out, it is to this kind of play, mimetic or inventive, that readership expectation looks, so that, in a final paradox, it seems as if what we are offered is a "traditional" novel of social comedy to which only rigorously "formalist" criteria apply. But not quite. De Vries, in the vagaries of speech is indeed, as it has always been, the driving force of De Vries's writing. And in this novel, Daisy is given the means to represent it. But its obviousness carries risks, and if Effie "spits invectives like they were kindling wood", we squirm a little at the narrator's "to regularly mouth" and when "sobriquet" becomes "sobriquet".

There is, too, the quite different fact that De Vries likes Daisy. And with that comes a reversal of perspective: instead of character and plot being no more than paths to puns (something which would, given the invective of feminism, be peculiarly dangerous), verbal by-play and comedy of situation screen the expression of private hopes. Daisy isn't only a clever girl; she's also a nice girl. It matters to De Vries that her language, and the range of feeling that underlies it, should put her beyond the reach of Ms Diesel, of MCFs and of the piggery lurking even in males who escape the label.

It's an engagingly old-fashioned, kindly liberal view, and if it's all the same unlikely to stay the wrath of militants. It says that Peter De Vries will take risks. And it's great fun. As Dirk Dolfin would say: "Would you have otherwise?"

JULIAN SYMONS:

Tom Adams' Agatha Christie Cover Story  
144pp. Limpfield, Surrey: Paper Tiger.  
£8.95.  
0 905895 62 2

In designing and executing his paintings for the covers of Agatha Christie's detective stories, Tom Adams would go to as much trouble over details as the novelist herself. The blackbird for *A Pocket Full of Rye* was painted from a rotting skeleton, the tennis racket replacing the vicar's head for *Murder at the Vicarage* was borrowed from Dunlop's own museum, Chiswick House provided the collapsing greenhouse and the camellia for *Nemesis*, and an acquaintance loaned the skull for *The Hound of Death*, apparently with great reluctance: "He used to telephone me almost every day to ask how it was and much too soon to ask for it back." (Tom Adams's prose is less confident than his painting.) The friend was right to be anxious. Adams tells us, apropos of the rotting blackbird, that he is "irredeemably addicted to the collecting of skulls and skeletons, sometimes [sic], I am afraid, even before the flesh has recently departed from the bones. My family think the habit morbid and unattractive."

He is also "very fond of insects" (note the flies crawling over the shoeless foot of *The Body in the Library*) and has "always been fascinated by spiders" (see the cover of *Appointment with Death* where the spider emerges from the head of the girl, her scalp neatly sliced at the top like an egg, the spider's legs like a sinister arachnoid fringe). Adams has plenty of spiders about him: "After conquering an early childhood fear I have occasionally kept them as pets, mated them and raised their enormous families. This is basically the trap door spider (*Pachylomeniscus Nidularia*) with some liberties taken." (It would have a name like the trap door spider.) He is, however, sometimes short of birds - but Adams is a resourceful fellow. Take the occasion when he was asked by the *Saturday Evening Post* to illustrate *Endless Night* when it was first serialized in America. "I wanted to do something rather special," Adams recalls, "and as I was living in London at the time with little access to dead birds I rang up the RSPCA just on the off-chance that they might have something. I was told that they had just been given the corpse of a Tawny owl which had died in mysterious circumstances without a mark on it. A night bird! This was too good a chance to miss. With great reluctance and a strange sense of doing something wrong I arranged the body and stabbed that lovely plumage in the name of realism."

One way and another a fair amount of stabbing goes on in the Adams studio; his enthusiasm is evidently contagious. The doll depicted on the cover of *Evil Under the Sun* was modelled in wax "by a young friend who was working for me at the time. He very much enjoyed painting and sticking pins in it." As for *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, "my obsessive concern for realism I actually plunger the dagger [note the rapturous zest of "plunger"] through my own wrist of coal on a dummy; the only way to find out exactly what happens to cloth when you strike a dagger through it in anger. With the addition of a little red ink and the fore-runner of the files that were to hover around: several of my later illustrations, I set the grisly scene. Since Adams is so particular, I am sure he will not mind my passing on a hint from a "professional": driving a dagger downwards into a jacket certainly does interesting things to the cloth but it is a very unsatisfactory way of stabbing someone in the back. The structure of the ribcage is such of his appraisal has in some cases been a revelation to me too, although I don't always agree with what he says, it makes fascinating reading". Moreover, in discussing

## The art of murder

By Janet Morgan

Poirot's age. Adams presents Symons with a little fairing in the shape of a plug for "his biographical studies, *The Great Detectives*", upon which of course, Symons's collaborator was Adams himself.

Another familiar face from *The Great Detectives* is our old friend Virgil Pomfret (he is, I think, Adams's agent, who inspired that work and, probably, this, here providing a rather coy preface ("Personally I owe a lot to Tom's success in these early days. . . . The international demand for his work which grew rapidly opened many doors for me"). Oddly reproduced as a typed office memorandum, with apostrophes endearingly added afterwards by hand, John Fowles also intervenes, with an

Agatha Christie's detective stories themselves. His paintings are astonishingly varied in style: there is one here - *A Caribbean Mystery* - that derives from Tcheliatchew, one - *Adventures of the Christmas Pudding* - like the jolly drawings from the *Wizard of Oz* (except for the robin which is tasting the blood spilt on the snow), another - *Destination Unknown* - a very dated psychedelic sixties illustration and, in its American version, with desert rocks growing into giant frogs, using a good deal to Dalí. The tennis-racket head on *Murder at the Vicarage* is inspired by Magritte, the American version of the cover for *Towards Zero*, with a stretch of choppy water and an orange-purple sky, is reminiscent

Horse); the extraordinary emerging from the ordinary, as spiders grow out of heads, a man's face turns into an antlered deer and a woman's into a dog, trees sprout faces, hair becomes knitting wool; the arrangement of everyday objects to make something horrid - a clock, dead violets, a newspaper cutting, or a pestle, a glass and an ancient document, and the use, in a collage, of objects that are all symbolic - a lipstick, fire-tongs, London burning, a photograph of Marilyn Monroe's white teeth and reddened lips.

The quickness of the hand deceives the eye and, just as Agatha Christie's first few pages ensnare her readers, so Adams's covers lead us on. (It is interesting that there is often a strong detail in the bottom right-hand corner of his paintings, as if to entice us to open the cover.) The illustrations in this book are beautifully shown; it is an addictive pleasure to look at these disturbing pictures. We could do, however, with more chromological detail. Pretty well all we are told is that Adams painted his first Christie cover in 1962 and that his association with Fontana lasted until very recently, but it would be helpful to have dates for all the commissions shown here and some information as to which of Mrs Christie's stories Adams has not illustrated. Adams, and his publishers, do not mind keeping readers in the dark; as a matter of fact they have a slightly irritating tendency to play silly games of mystification with this book, with Mr Symons joining in. There are little jokes about a piece of driftwood, shown in the American cover for *Evil Under the Sun*, presented by the woman who became the illustrator's second wife; bits from one illustration are used, untitled, to fill in blank spaces; curious allusions are made to missing versions of various covers and to the disappearance of certain original paintings; there are vague references to the difficulty which Julian Symons had in seeing some of the paintings themselves, rather than as photographs or on film. To be fair, though, Adams may merely be trying to be discreet in referring to his relations with his publishers and to the opinion that the Christie family, generally interested and admiring, may have had of particular covers. Nor is it easy to produce a book that is sufficiently serious for readers interested primarily in the subtleties of these illustrations but at the same time chatty enough for the vast throng of Christie readers.

But Adams, Symons, Pomfret and Co have pulled it off with a mixture of professional exactitude and easy conversation. Nice Mr Adams; one concludes; such a sinister pointer but such an unthreatening, ordinary fellow, with his touching blunders: "I also think that the title is one of the most evocative of all Agatha Christie's," he says of *Sad Cypress*; spelling it like the legend; Ruthless; yet faintly ridiculous. Rather like Poirot and Miss Marple, in a way.

In June Thompson's *Shadow of a Doubt* (221pp, Constable, £6.95, 0 09 464350 4) her slow, quiet Essex policeman, Detective Chief Inspector Finch, looks into the disappearance of Cleo Jordan, timid middle-aged wife of a successful psychiatrist with a private clinic in the country. Rather an old-fashioned trick lies at the base of the plot, but the novel's strength lies more in subtle depiction of character and of interplay between personalities than in complicated detective work.

Peter Abrahams, in *The Fury of Rachel Monette* (310pp, Muller, £7.50, 0 584 31511 6), tells how she, living quietly on a New England campus with her husband - a professor of French - and a small son, returns home one day to find the husband murdered and the son kidnapped. The search for revenge and her child takes her to North Africa, Israel and France, and through a lot of pages. Credibility is shaky, but the narrative moves too fast for it ever to collapse completely.

T. J. Binyon



Wearing his wit in his belly and gut in his head? Tom Adams's illustration for the cover of *Murder at the Vicarage* is taken from the book reviewed here.

introduction describing how Tom Adams's talent was first recognized in 1962 when he was commissioned to produce a jacket for Fowles's novel *The Collector*. In Fowles's view, his "secret as cover-illustrator lies . . . above all in his capacity for being oblique, yet so presenting this obliquity that it constitutes a lure". It is often difficult to say why Adams's covers are menacing: "Tom never shows violence, only its aftermath, and sometimes not even that. This is not quite right. At least three of the covers here are fairly grisly: *Lord Edgware Dies* shows the gory results of driving a knife - downwards - into the back of the head; *N or M?*, with a hammer lying in the sand, sticky with blood and "real human hair", is "another grand-guignol favourite of Mark Collins"; and, "egged on by Mark Collins", Adams gives *Murder in the Mews* a glass pane cracked by a bullet into a spider's web pattern, splashed with very juicy blood. As Adams says in discussing the toothless skulls and gigantic eyeball on the cover for *The Hound of Death* (received with "almost childlike enthusiasm" from Mark Collins, Virgil Pomfret and Christie Barnard, the then art director). "Those were heady days at Fontana."

(I do not think: think this deadpan remark is a deliberate pun.) But John Fowles and, more, Julian Symons are correct in observing that the success of Adams's illustrations lies in their juxtaposition of the normal with the sinister, much like

cent of Andrew Wyeth, the American cover for *Hickory Dickory Dock* shows a lighted street somehow like those of Atkinson Grimshaw, while the nasty-looking little girl, with her long black hair, summer frock and hard spectacles, quietly writing, on the cover of the American edition of *The Crooked House*, not only "comes from an Arthur Rackham illustration" but is sitting in the same position as the Little Mermaid, only here she is sinister.

The ninety or so covers reproduced in this book are arranged according to the themes of Agatha Christie's work: "Miss Marple and Mayhem", "Poirot and Poison", "Sins of the Fathers", "Something Nasty in the Nursery", "The Darker Side of Village Life", and "Out and About With Murder". This is a graceful compliment to Mrs Christie and, thanks to Julian Symons's discreet explanatory notes and Tom Adams's introductory paragraphs (owing a lot, as he acknowledges, to Robert Barnard's *A Talent To Deceive*), the structure is effective. Nor is it so obvious that we miss other patterns, in both the illustrator's and the author's work: the recurring device of the mirror; the dramatic use of perspective to mislead us into thinking the most prominent details are the most significant; the mixture of the realistic and the stylized; the presence of the supernatural (see the glorious, ectoplasmic elephant in *Elephants Can Remember* and the spectral night-ride in *The Pale*



## Country house Cluedo

By Andrew Motion

A Cotswold Death  
BBC TV

"Brideshead today would be open to trippers, its treasures rearranged by expert hands and the fabric better maintained than it was by Lord Marchmont." Towards the end of his life Evelyn Waugh was convinced that most English country houses could only survive by forfeiting their privacy. What would he have made of salvation by a foreign buyer? In Tony Bleat's *A Cotswold Death*, country house conventions are writ as large as they were in *Brideshead Revisited* — but for comic rather than sweetly-lit nostalgic effect. After all those weeks of Waugh's heartfelt but indulgent tristesse, the change is a relief.

The house in *A Cotswold Death* (actually Bamsley Park in Gloucestershire) has been saved from the "decay and spoliation" that Waugh feared by Sheikh Ali Ben Fessim. But as any Cluedo player could have told him, the traditions of English rural privilege provide the ideal conditions for another time-honoured custom: the country house murder. It is a matter of minutes before the play points this out to the Sheikh — in the library, with a paperknife. And because of his royal connections, the series of "Woodnutt" produce a detective of great eminence — none other than Inspector Anthony Arrowsmith, "Scotland Yard Superstar" and erstwhile scourge of the Cheltenham Ripper. But it rapidly becomes clear, this is more than a case of one celebrity trying to solve the death of another. It is a question of various unsuitable or outmoded traditions battling to survive. The beliefs and customs of the Arabs, though tolerated, are alien to the house; the exclusiveness and social structure of the house are out of step with the time; and Arrowsmith, "the last of the great detectives" is a self-confessed anachronism.

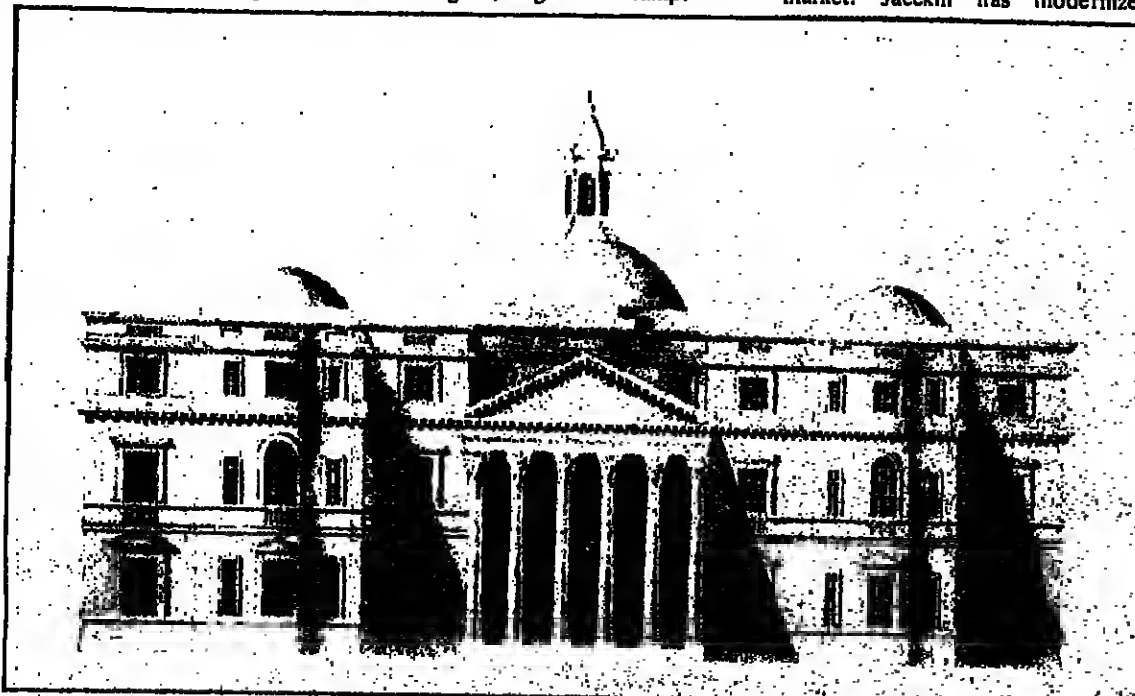
These misplaced and mistimed conventions provide Bleat with most of his comedy, largely because he credits his characters with enormous self-consciousness. Arrowsmith — played with excellently fustianous sadness by Ian Richardson — is not really aware of himself as "A technical character in a grey area," but regularly quotes other detectives, notably Sherlock Holmes. (The identification is more than a matter of words, too: in a wry pastiche of Holmes's drug-fading, Arrowsmith gives himself odd injections against diabetes.) His assistant, Detective Sergeant Baxter — the chauffeur in a tuxedo — is also given to elation, and in the course of investigations it becomes obvious that most of the suspects are similarly well aware of their stereotypes: Kerim, the sportscar-driving, cocaine-sniffing, girlfriend-grabbing second son of the dead Sheikh; the good old housekeeper with an extraordinary past; and the inscrutable butler whose actual response to the slauhter is "Traditionally the butler did it." Traditionally the police are fools, and a gifted amateur solves the case.

Bleat, the gifted amateur, does just that — with the help of a plot by Conan Doyle — but not before a couple of other characters have been disposed of. These are both, in their different ways, nice people whom fate or corruption has type-cast, and who therefore find themselves vulnerable. Young Geoff, the housekeeper's illegitimate step-son, and the Vicar whose congregation has shrunk almost to nothing and who amuses himself by playing at deception (a kind of Miss Marple and Father Brown rolled into one). But while their lives confirm the play's main theme, their deaths hardly thicken the plot. In fact, by the time the murderer is finally exposed, the plot is well over and the audience has

ing denied Baxter his moment of glory — the plot has begun to look distinctly thin. For the record, Ahmed, the Sheikh's elder son, has killed his father for fear of being prevented from living the life of a squire in England. The Sheikh, when she discovers this, kills herself and Ahmed by deliberately crashing her helicopter. This leaves Kerim free to revert to another type, renounce his car and girlfriend, and assume the responsibilities of a Sheikh.

Although this denouement is in keeping with the rest of the play, it brings to a crisis something which has been apparent throughout. As Bleat's discussion of tradition develops, it becomes repetitive, and

inhibits the play's ironical imagination. The comedy never quite absorbs, or escapes, the "serious" social and historical considerations. When Bleat gives his main preoccupation the slip, as in Arrowsmith's parodic but recognizably sequence, he is marvellously inventive. When he is more strictly confined to his subject, he is only rarely more than mildly amusing. Whatever its disadvantages, this at least allows attention to wander elsewhere, and concentrate on the play's two outstanding ingredients: the house, with its beautiful warm Cotswold stone exterior and ravishing hall; and Nick Bleat's music, which is exactly right — energetic, elegant and camp.



Thomas Wright's design for the south front of Horton House, Northamptonshire is one of 171 illustrations, including 12 colour plates, from *The Palladians* by John Harris (132pp. Trefoll Books. £11.95. 0 86294 001 X).

## Argument for the prosecution

By Harold Hobson

John Mortimer's Casebook  
Young Vic Theatre

After the marathon of *Brideshead Revisited*, John Mortimer's latest play, *Interlude*, is only a swift sprint, a spirited, forensic comedy which is rather frightening. As it is played at the Young Vic in John Mortimer's *Casebook* — in company with *Dock Brief* and *The Prince of Darkness* — it throws new light on both these plays, one of which — *Dock Brief* — is generally reckoned, along with Rattigan's *The Browning Version*, to be equal first in the ranks of English one-act plays written during the last half-century. The two halves of John Mortimer's professional career complement each other. Mortimer, D.C., usually appears as the defence; but Mortimer, dramatist, has in him a strong strain of counsel for the prosecution, and at the beginning of *John Mortimer's Casebook* he says specifically that the evening's three plays amount to an attack on the country's three most revered professions — the Law, the Church, and medicine.

The result is fascinating and surprising. In its new context the most famous of the three plays, *Dock Brief*, turns out to be the least convincing part of its author's indictment, though it remains the most theatrically gripping. The story of the slimy, almost to nothing and who amuses himself by playing at deception (a kind of Miss Marple and Father Brown rolled into one). But while their lives confirm the play's main theme, their deaths hardly thicken the plot. In fact, by the time the murderer is finally exposed, the plot is well over and the audience has

## For the sake of Art

By Helen McNeill

Lady Chatterley's Lover  
Various Cinemas

This piece of codswallop is truly the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* for our times. Its director, Just Jaeckin, and his creature, Sylvia Kristel already occupy a certain niche in our culture for their *Emmanuelle* films, which made "tasteful" soft porn into a mass entertainment form of the 1970s. Now they are attempting another genre breakthrough by adapting D. H. Lawrence's novel for what might best be called the mass art film market. Jaeckin has modernized

Lawrence's rather dated epic of phallus-worship into a narcissistic and masturbatory cinema lyric which seems gruesomely appropriate to contemporary taste. The result is, however, nothing more or less than another soft-porn film, albeit with filler by Lawrence.

Where both talent and conviction are absent, packaging is all. Jaeckin's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is all about the wrapping and unwrapping of a commercial package. As the film opens, sombre mood music, soft focus, and an arty zoom towards the darkened Chatterley mansion signal the onset of what appears to be a sluggish multi-part television version of some beloved classic of historical fiction. With a tediousness that appears to arise from loyalty to an old-fashioned text, Jaeckin shows that Britain and Germany are about to go to war by having a Prussian and an Englishman quibble between waltzes *chez* Chatterley. Lawrence wrote no such scene, but by boring us with potted history, Jaeckin and co-author Christopher Wickham presumably hope they have gained the right to omit Constance Chatterley's first affair with Michaelis and to gloss over the irritable and impulsive rejections which mark her relations with all her men. The film's other generic packaging becomes most apparent once Constance and gamekeeper Mellors have got going. Thereafter, sequences of running and dancing in slow motion, pastel colour tones, glistening bodies and a slowly downward-panning camera transport the viewer to a land of make-believe the likes of which most of us have experienced only in abbreviated form while watching chocolate commercials.

*Lady Chatterley's Lover* was meant to be the film in which Sylvia Kristel finally put on her clothes for the sake of Art, and in fact Shirley Russell's meticulous costumes do provide the most consistent source of visual pleasure. Miss Kristel enunciates complete and correctly pronounced English sentences with the aid of dubbing; post-synching makes everyone else seem to talk too loudly and in a vacuum. But clothed or naked, Kristel can't act. Since the film is her vehicle, most of the supporting cast under-act, either to help her out or to add to the general tedium. Ann Mitchell's muted Mrs Bolton suggests a discreet and infelicitously wise Athena of rather greater depth than Lawrence's servile original; as Mellors, Nicholas Clay spouts Yorkshire dialect throughout, although Lawrence's Mellors turned there is the event; on the other, better to let the strength of his enormous buttocks which are prominently displayed in several scenes of the film, sometimes in proximity to Miss Kristel's enviously antiseptic body.

As a record of bow certain segments of contemporary Western society imagine themselves making love, Jaeckin's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* deserves a time capsule of its own. Without films like this, the future might not know that we like to think that the female, upon being embraced by the male, arches her head back to avoid further kisses.

*Dock Brief* grips; *The Prince of Darkness* entertainingly baffles and outrages; but *Interlude* horrifies. Another simple-minded fellow (but this time not a murderer) wanders into a hospital, and is practically high-jacked by an enthusiastic nurse (played in bustling, dominating drag by Nigel Hawthorne). Before he knows what is happening to him, and in spite of his protests, the poor fellow (John Alderton) is analysed, his analysis, in which he is forced to re-enact a childish incident at a circus when a clown's long nose had frightened him, is a farcical and sickening business. When finally the unwilling patient, rendered insensible through terror, falls inertly off his couch on to the floor, a doctor, hurrying called in, gives the body a contemptuous look so that it rolls to the edge of the stage. It is a very powerful incident. Whatever makes of the law or the Church, one laments the Young Vic feeling, at least momentarily, that in medicine (the Devil) is certainly a reality.

The Oxford Playhouse Company's production of *Maebelle* will play in Oxford until February 6. Thereafter it can be seen at the Wyvern Theatre, Swindon (February 8-11); The Devoevire Park Theatre, Eastbourne (February 15-20); and the Playhouse, Weston-Super-Mare (February 22-27).

## The melancholy round

By Gabriele Annan

La Ronde  
Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester  
Aldwych Theatre, London

Schnitzler's *Reigen* — called *La Ronde* in England by universal consent, it seems, presumably in homage to Max Ophüls's film — is a series of ten dialogues: the first between a prostitute and a soldier, the second between the soldier and a housemaid, the third between the housemaid and her employers' son, and so on. In the last, the prostitute reappears with the count from the penultimate episode. Each scene culminates in the sexual act, indicated in the text by a row of dots. When Schnitzler wrote the piece in Vienna in 1896 he never expected or indeed wanted, it to be performed. It had to wait until 1920, when it was put on in Berlin and caused uproar in the theatre and a scandal that reverberated for years. A Mrs Whitehouse of the time brought a case against the author, producer and cast; the court acquitted them and pronounced the play to be a highly moral condemnation of promiscuity. Nevertheless, Schnitzler was so distressed that he placed an embargo on his work, and this was maintained by his estate after his death in 1931. It expired in January 1982, which explains the present outbreak of productions.

In the original performance, the curtain was lowered on the dots and quickly raised again for the post-coital reprise. In Manchester the theatre is in the round; Caspar Wrede gets his actors briefly off the stage when the text allows, or — much less successfully — out of sight under a table, a tent, or a bench; or he simply blacks out. In London John Barton's couples couple in full view of the audience, but with the minimum of exposure.

Both in Manchester and London the programme notes make much of Freud's admiration for Schnitzler, in whose work he found "the very same presuppositions, interests and conclusions" as were his own. Schnitzler — a doctor, like Freud, and with a particular interest in psychological disorders — wrote a great many plays, stories and novels. There is no knowing which of them Freud particularly had in mind. I do not think it can have been *La Ronde*. True, it is about sex (though Freud had other interests — and some of them, like Jewishness, he certainly shared with Schnitzler); but so are works by Racine and Feydeau about sex. In fact, one could almost call *La Ronde* anti-Freudian. None of the characters have any sexual hang-ups, except for the Young Gentleman who can't make it the first time with the Young Wife but quickly gets over this with her help.

More important, not one of them feels any real guilt whatsoever. Yet there is plenty of scope for guilt of some sort, for in each pair of lovers one exploits the other. It is usually the women who are the victims and take it for granted that this must be so. Schnitzler — unlike Freud — is always on the woman's side, even when the woman is dominant; like the Young Wife or the Actress who eats meat for breakfast. (The Count is so come it four that he is reluctant to be eaten until dinner).

Freud also noted Schnitzler's "dissection of the cultural and conventional certainties of our society". Here one is on a firmer ground. Schnitzler goes straight for the worship of sexual purity and the hypocrisy to which it leads. The Housemaid, the Sweet Girl (a sort of Viennese midwife), and the Young Wife all have to pretend to be innocent when they are not. The philandering husband, too, is in love with an ideal of virgin purity and believes it to be ingrained in his "risky" wife. He tells her that promiscuous ladies have "a certain nostalgia for virtue". The line is important because it defines a society in

which hypocrisy has toppled over into mawkishness. Schnitzler gets a lot of comedy out of sending up the mawkishness; particularly the lachrymatory notion that promiscuity makes women deeply unhappy, and that men are really revolted by sleeping with them and by their own promiscuity. It is Freud who endorses society's sanctimonious assumption that sex has built into it — though of course for other reasons. Another bourgeois fantasy satirized in the play is the idea of man as a heroic tailor whose efforts and hardships should make a woman feel humble. "The young gentleman works so hard", the Housemaid says to him as

both give the meaning and seem easy on the tongue. But by losing the Viennese vernacular, both lose not only the characters' instant social definition, but also their charm; and they need charm because this is an erotic piece and it would be beastly if they had none. Another, different problem is the monotony of the structure which is very noticeable in Manchester. The production needs not only to put back the charm: it needs a lot of variety, poetry, mood and atmosphere. Barton's does all this.

Caspar Wrede's Manchester production is set in a modern age which stretches from the prostitute's max-

married five years and have one child. Supposing they conformed more or less to the nineteenth-century Central European prescription whereby a bridegroom should be twice the age of his bride minus seven, at the time of the play, Emma (who married straight from the nursery) would be between 23 and 27 (about the same age as her seducer), and Karl between 34 and 42. But Tony Church is a little too much of a patrician in his smoking cap: one would give the two of them at least fifteen years of marriage and five children. Susan Fleetwood is altogether too comfortable-looking; her sister would never have given a ball — which is where Emma met the Young Gentleman.

The ultimate in bravura performances at the Aldwych come from Richard Pascoe and Barbara Leigh-Hunt as the Poet and the Actress, she a cross between Irene Worth and Tallulah Bankhead, he a superb parody of Gielgud. Corrina Seddon is particularly good as the Prostitute. She opens the play on a hoarse sexy whisper (in contrast to the piercing shriek of the Manchester text), and in spite of her constant protestations that she is always lucky, she seems sad and defeated.

This is as it should be. Schnitzler said about his play: "I felt the melancholy of it much more strongly than the funny side." The melancholy is generally supposed to be post-coital; in fact, after sex most of the characters are not so much sad as afraid of being caught, either by their recent partner or by society. But the sadness is elsewhere, and of every sort and kind. There is the sadness of longing for an ideal love, either lost for ever or never encountered — a comic parody of Plato's divided soul searching for its other half. The Sweet Girl has never got over her first Karl, nor the Actress over her Fritz — even though both were rotters. The Count kisses the Prostitute's eyes because they remind him of someone else. The cuckolded husband is in love with his onetime house. Apart from the Poet and the Actress, conformed from communication with others by their, colossal egotisms, all the rest are seeking to "connect", but in vain: the Count, rigid and almost speechless with conventionality, is absurdly looking for someone "to talk to"; the wife feels insufficiently loved by her husband; the Sweet Girl has learnt to accept the fact that most men who take her out are married.

There is also the sadness of transience. John Barton's set is dominated by a big clock that tells the real time. "Who knows if we'll still be alive tomorrow?" the Prostitute says to the soldier. The Young Gentleman uses the same argument to Emma: "Life is so short." There is also just plain despair, never seriously expressed, but voiced often. When the soldier is warned about falling into the Danube he says "Best place for me anyway". Even the silly Count knows "there's no such thing as happiness". When he says it, it is a cliché, but true.

John Barton makes the comedy broader than one might have expected; but the *dylog* fall can be heard all the way through. Scene changes, which take place in view of the audience, are set to music by Guy Woolfenden and arranged as small ballets expressing the mood of the next scene to come. These interludes are pretty, witty and meticulously produced. Timothy O'Brien has designed a permanent archway of colossal caryatids up, under the flies; heavily Franz Joseph to style, they hang oppressively over the changing scenery on the stage floor, where hints of Jugendstil and Sezessionist are allowed to creep in like harbingers of a new dawn. The general idiom, however, suggests not renewal but decay, the Habsburg Empire sinking into decline as its intellectuals mock their own pessimism.

Not only that, but Cheryl Prime also gives a very good performance of the Sweet Girl as a little North Country raver. She is the only one in the cast to catch the patina of any character: less giddy, less pretty and more touching than the rather too dazzling Judy Buxton in London. The Manchester married couple are also better cast than the London pair. For the RSC, Susan Fleetwood and Tony Church give brilliant comic making her interpolate "Sir". Osborne has simply cut the lines. There is little to choose between the two transla-



Emblem on *Moringe*, a woodcut from Barthelme Aeneas's *Picta Poesis* (published in Lyon in 1552) in the British Library collection, is reproduced from *The Androgyne* by Eleanore Zollo (Ypp. Thomas and Hudson. £3.95. 0 500 810281).

he lies on the sofa reading a novel; and Jackie Kennedy outfit to the Sweet Girl's mind. Perhaps this is to show that sex is timeless, but it makes it difficult to explain the Young Gentleman's porpoine and the *chambre* *separée* where the Sweet Girl is seduced; it also takes a lot of point from the marital dialogue about the innocence of well-brought-up girls. Sex in Manchester is about as erotic as locking two bicycle clips together.

The production was well received when I saw it. With the house astonishingly full for a Wednesday night, the audience seemed composed equally of very young and very old people; the latter included a few hochschulierte Central Europeans who listened and watched with the knowledge of knowledge, like old Bayreuth buffs at the Coliseum. They could hardly have seen the play in 1920 but they knew what it should be like. When the Sweet Girl stripped off, one old lady prodded her neighbour: "Look at her puddy", she whispered with appreciative expertise. "Good puddy."

Neither Charles Osborne in his translation (211pp. Carcanet. 26.95. 085533981) for the Manchester Royal Exchange for John Barton and Sue Davies in theirs (Ypp. Penguin. £1.30. 0 14 048 1710) for the RSC have attempted to render any idiosyncrasies of speech. They were still left with plenty of problems. The Husband, for instance, keeps trying to make the Sweet Girl call him "Du" (thou) instead of "Sie" (you). Bartoo and Tony Church have dealt with this very well by making her interpolate "Sir". Osborne has simply cut the lines. There is little to choose between the two transla-

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Godfrey W. Bond

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## Euripides: Fabulae

Volume II  
Edited by James Diggle

This is the first of three volumes which will eventually replace Gilbert Murray's Oxford Text of Euripides. Dr Diggle has examined the most important manuscripts himself. His text differs in numerous places from Murray's, and his apparatus criticus gives a fuller report of conjectures, including many by modern scholars. £8.25 Oxford Classical Texts 28 January

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Oxford  
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## Advertising Kunst

By John Willett

The Art of the Poster in Austria and Germany 1900-1920  
Fischer Fine Art,  
30 King St. St James's, London SW1.

This exhibition may not be very profound, but it entertainingly illuminates the way in which taste gets made. Anyone expecting to catch some reflection of the great radical art movements of those two decades will be disappointed: Schiele, Klee, Kandinsky, the Blaue Reiter and so on might as well not exist for all one sees of them here. Even their backwash is viable - Pechstein's or Ulitz's political posters for instance of 1918-1919 are not shown. What the visitor can see however is the way in which the impact which those radicals made on critics some twenty-five or thirty years ago has led to a reevaluation (not least in crude monetary terms, with prices ranging up to £1,500 and more) of the more conventional commercial art which continued alongside them. The show bridges a gap in the superficial fashions of the same period as the public subsequently came to accept them, linking Art Nouveau to Art Deco via the Viennese designers and the notably heavier-handed Munich school.

Not many well-known artists are involved. Von Stuck from Munich, Moser and Roller from Vienna are represented; there is also a powerful design from Zagreb apparently by Mestrovich (whom the catalogue calls Mestrovich), and a sub-Nazi horseman for the 1914 Werkbund exhibition by Peter Behrens, which makes a useful use of a gilt ground. The catalogue tells us nothing about the remainder apart from their dates, nor does it comment on the occasions and apparent purposes of the

various posters. Yet this is among the most intriguing aspects of the subject, which kept up a certain notalgia even after the Habsburg and Hohenzollern empires had fallen. The Austrians advertise War Loan with nasty-tempered eagles and Statues-of-Libertyesque ladies, or they deploy their cultivated conventional elegance to entice the postwar public to Viennese balls. There are some good posters for the Secession exhibition, notably a strongly abstract design of 1912 by Richard Hartinger and a lithograph by the rather older Friedrich König. The dates of the show are a little misleading (items are actually from 1897 to 1929) and the two most comic exhibits show a piglet in a hat and a man pointing a smoking gun into an apple tree to advertise what the catalogue terms "Anniversary of Kaiser and Federal Austrian shooting" in 1898, and an earnest figure carrying passengers in the celebration of the opening of the Schneberg funicular around the same time; this unfortunate piece of misplaced mythology is by Alfred Roller.

The Munich posters, many of them advertising art exhibitions (including one at the Glaspalast in 1926, only five years before it burned down), tend to be forbiddingly classical in the manner taken over and developed further by Hitler's Haus der Deutschen Kunst. Or, if they seem over-gentle, like the group of designers whose best-known member was Emil Preterorius. More could have been said about the many excellent posters, the most useful thing about the catalogue (whose transcription of titles and names tends to be slapdash) is its unfolding to become itself a poster which gives reproductions of all the listed exhibits; this makes a good and cheerful prospectus, though its colour is very approximate.

## Bear-baiting

By Elizabeth Winter

Andrzej Krauze  
The Polish Social and Cultural Centre, 240 King Street, London W6.

This exhibition of drawings and cartoons by the young Polish artist, Andrzej Krauze, provides an exceptional opportunity for looking behind the headlines of recent events in Poland. It coincides with the publication of a selection of more than eighty of his cartoons, entitled *Andrzej Krauze's Poland*, with a preface by George Mikas and captioned in Polish, Russian and English (95pp. Nino Karsov, London, £4.50, 0 907652 01 &). Both the exhibition, which is on until January 24, and the book were, of course, prepared before the imposition of martial law in December.

Krauze's cartoons have appeared in major English, French and German papers. Before leaving Poland in 1979, he was a regular contributor to the weekly Warsaw journal *Kultura*, and during 1980 his work appeared in the trade union paper *Solidarnosc*. He is also an outstanding poster designer and illustrator of children's books; he illustrated the Polish translation of *Animal Farm* brought out by the independent publishing house NOWA. A small selection of his non-political drawings are also on show - surreal, grotesque and private visions of animal shapes merging into human form, or of inanimate objects taking on weird dimensions under some nameless pressure.

His cartoons deal with such aspects of the Polish situation as bureaucratic oppression, the pusillanimity of the average, conformist chaos

censorship in all its subtle and devious manifestations, and, never very far away, the "geographic situation" in the shape of the demarcated figure of Brezhnev. The tense and anxious relationship between the Party and Solidarity is a crucial theme.

The cover of the book shows the giant figure of Solidarity, breaking through the ropes, from the ropes, the figure of the Party, watched in silence by the tiny, bewildered figure of Party men. In earlier drawings, dating from 1976-80, the recurrent figure of the Party man appears as a speech-making apparatus, with all the paraphernalia of office - briefcase, notes, microphone - a tobe-thumping, alogan-shouting, six-handed "spiderman". In another drawing he is proudly showing his son the podium, microphones, potted plant, portrait and flag in the empty meeting room, saying, "One day, my son, all this will be yours".

The Party man's complacency receives a rude shock to summer 1980. With the caption, "A sea wind" from the Baltic port of Gdansk rises the puffing figure of Solidarity, scattering the trappings of bureaucracy. In the period of "renewal" the apparatus is seen atoning, still once, in a vision being pulled over the rough and stony ground by the stolid, slightly naive figure of Solidarity, the Church giving a helping hand from the rear. And again we see the Party man appealing to the lumbering figure of Brezhnev, the bear, complaining that his diminutive playmate - Solidarity - won't play with him.

The immediacy of impact in Krauze's work is frequently emphasized by the captions, scrawled, graffiti-like, above the drawings. This is a richly rewarding exhibition.

## Fin-de-siècle in Finland

By J. M. Richards

Lars Sonck 1870-1956  
RIBA Heinz Gallery,  
21 Portman Square, London W1.

The Museum of Finnish Architecture in Helsinki, one of the best-run organizations of its kind, specializes in modest but scholarly exhibitions, mostly based on research by its own staff. Some, regrettably, are not seen elsewhere except in the form of the illustrated catalogues produced with them (the fascinating 1979 exhibition, compiled by Asko Selokorpi, on the eighteenth-century Finnish ironworking communities was a case in point), but some are afterwards sent on tour. The Heinz Gallery's exhibition (open until February 27) on the architect Lars Sonck is one of these. It is accompanied by an excellent monograph on Sonck (*Lars Sonck 1870-1956*, by Pekka Korvenmaa, Paula Kivinen and Asko Selokorpi, 78pp. Museum of Finnish Architecture, £6.) with text in English as well as Finnish.

His arrival here is welcome because, although the gallery's information handout exaggerates when it describes Sonck as hardly known outside Finland, only certain prominent buildings by him in Tampere and Helsinki are familiar and the part he played in that remarkable fin-de-siècle episode, the Finnish National Romantic movement, has never been made plain although Sonck, along with Eliel Saarinen, was its main instigator among the architects (just as Jean Sibelius was among the musicians and Akseli Gallen-Kallela among the painters). The exhibition gives full attention to Sonck's early work which helped to set the movement going.

It was as much a political as a cultural movement in that it was inspired by the desire, in Finland in

the 1890s, to cultivate a sense of national identity following the repressions of the Russian regime under the Tsar Nicholas II, which had increasingly denied Finland the large degree of autonomy the country had theoretically possessed since its seizure from Sweden in 1809. The leaders of the movement looked especially to Karelia, Finland's eastern province, for reminders of their architectural heritage, and the architectural outcome was first seen in some small houses in the Åland islands built by Sonck in 1894-95 with walls of logs and widely projecting eaves, modelled on the traditional Karelian farmhouse. They included a house for his own use on the remote island of Finström where he had spent his childhood and which he continued to inhabit for the rest of his life. These houses were followed by a villa at Kuopio (1902) in similar style and the Villa Aino which he built for Sibelius in 1904 in an artists' colony at Järvenpää on the shores of Lake Tuusula, where the composer lived.

The National Romantic movement, of which these houses, and Oesellus, Lindgren and Saarinen's group of houses and studios at Hvitträsk (1901), were the beginning, grew into something bigger than a nostalgic look back into the past; for they and the later work of the same architects reflected also the ferment that was taking place at that time in Europe: Art Nouveau, in Brussels, the Secession in Vienna and the Arts and Crafts movement in England (there are echoes of Voysey and Baillie Scott in Sonck's and his colleagues' houses). For a while this revolutionary style - or amalgam of styles - dominated Finnish architecture.

Sonck was responsible for some of its major monuments such as the cathedral at Tampere (1902) and the extraordinary Telephona Building at Helsinki (1905), both having the rock-faced stonework that historians have attributed to the influence of

the American H. H. Richardson, but may just as likely be based on medieval precedents in Finland itself. Perhaps Sonck's best building was the Eira Hospital, Helsinki (1905), which is useful to have the whole range of his work on record including his personal version of late Gothic Revival, but the exhibition underlines the fact that, compared with his later work, his early designs were rather stiff and formal. The movement of change can be identified in the design of 1906 for the prominent, tiled Kallio church in Helsinki and photographs of the church as completed in 1912. Only Sonck's work in domestic architecture remained consistent throughout his career.

The monograph includes an interesting article on his career and a very positive personality by Paul Kivinen which does not, however, touch much about the surprising attention to sociability and solidarity that were typical of his later life, although an analysis of these could perhaps throw light on the change that took place in his work. He had to be eighty-six and many stories current in Finland about his death, such as that he died of a heart attack, illustrating his own communicative temperament, was told to me many years ago by the late Aalto when we were driving together across southern Finland to look at his newly completed library at Viipuri. We passed close to Lake Tuusula, which reminded Aalto of Sonck and the other National Romantic architects whose influence on his own work he acknowledged. Sonck never married but maintained a succession of mistresses. In order to ensure that each mistress, when they parted, had the means of earning a living, he presented her with a expensive sewing-machine. This became known and accepted. A sewing-machine would be delivered to his house; the current mistress knew it was time to go. No announcement or explanation was needed.

## Among this week's contributors

ZYGMUNT G. BARANSKI is a lecturer in Italian at the University of Reading.

HAROLD BRAUER was recently elected to the new chair of American Literature at the University of Amsterdam.

ANTHONY BURGESS's most recent novel is *Earthly Powers*, 1981. His opera *The Bloods of Dublin* is to be broadcast on February 1.

WILLIAM COLEMAN is Professor of History of Science and History of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

PATRICK COLLINSON is Professor of History at the University of Kent. His most recent book is *Archbishop Grindal 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church*, 1979.

CLARE CROSS's most recent book is *Church and People 1450-1660*, 1976.

C. S. L. DAVIES is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford. He is the author of *Peace, Print and Protestantism 1450-1558*, 1977.

MISRA DONAT is a Radio 3 music producer.

FILIPPO DOMINI was formerly Director of the Italian Institute in London.

TIM DOOLEY is the editor of the poetry magazine, *Green Lines*.

O. R. ELTON's books include *England Under the Tudors*, 1955, and *Reform and Reformation*, 1977.

STEPHEN FENNER's *Plotting the Gold in West* will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

KYRIL FITZLYON's most recent book is *Before the Revolution*, 1978.

ALBERT HOURANI's most recent book is *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, 1981.

GABRIEL JOSPOVICI's most recent novel, *The Air We Breathe*, was published last October.

MICHAEL KENNARD's books include *The Autobiography of Charles Holle*, 1972.

ZACHARY LEADNER's *Reading Blake's Songs* was published last year.

JOHN MCCARTHY is the Governor of HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

PATRICK MCCARTHY is the author of *Celine*, 1975. His biography of Albert Camus will be published next month.

HELEN MCNEIL is a lecturer in English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

ADAM MARS-JONES's book of stories *Lantern Lecture* was published in 1981.

HOWARD MILLER was formerly Master of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. He is co-author of *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change 1086-1348*, 1978.

JANEY MORRAN is writing the official biography of Agatha Christie.

KENNETH O. MORGAN's books include *Wales 1830-1980*, 1981.

ANDREW MOTION's long poem *Impendence* was published in December.

JOHN PARRY's collection of essays *Hand to Mouth* is reviewed on page 68.

VALERIE PEARL is the President of New Hall, Cambridge.

SIR JAMES RICHARDS was editor of *The Architectural Review* from 1971 to 1971.

JOHN RUSSELL BROWN is Professor of English at the University of Sussex and Associate Director of The National Theatre.

KERRY SCHOTT is a lecturer in English at University College London.

GEORGE STEINER's books include *Hedger and On Difficulty and Other Essays*, both 1978. His novel *The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.* was published last year.

JONATHAN SUMPTON's books include *Pilgrimage*, 1975, and *The Arabian Crusade*, 1978.

PHILIP THODY's books include *Reform: A Conservative Estimate*, 1977.

JOHN WARRACK's books include *Carl Maria von Weber*, 1968, and *Tchikovsky*, 1975.

HUGH WILLIAMS's *No Particular Place to Go* was first published last year.

JOHN WILLET's books include *Expressionism*, 1971, and *The New Sobriety*, 1977.

## 'Political Pilgrims'

Sir, - A standard device by which the conformist intellectuals of East or West deal with irritating dissent is to try to overwhelm it with a flood of lies. Paul Johnson illustrates the technique with his reference to my "prodigies of apologetics" for the *Khmer Rouge* (December 25). I have stated the facts before in this journal, and will do so again, not under any illusion that they will be relevant to the guardians of the faith.

My "prodigies of apologetics" during the Pol Pot years consisted of a single review-article (*Nation*, June 25, 1977), in which E. S. Herman and I discussed media manipulation of evidence concerning Indochina. With regard to Cambodia, we reviewed estimates of killings from "possibly thousands" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*) - when the Pol Pot regime fell, the *Review* estimated the population at 8.2 million, well above the 1975 level to millions, noting that "it is a fair generalization that the larger the number of deaths attributed to the Khmer Rouge, and the more the US role is set aside, the larger the audience that will be reached". We concluded accurately that "we do not know where the truth lies amidst these sharply conflicting assessments". We praised François Ponchaud's *Cambodge ou le zéro* as "serious and worth reading", noting his "gristly account of what refugees have reported to him about the barbarity of their treatment at the hands of the Khmer Rouge" and their "brutal practice".

Apart from this article, my "prodigies" consisted of letters to several journalists urging that in referring to what he wrote rather than relying on falsified commentary on his book, Ponchaud's own reaction to the totality of my writings on Cambodia during the Pol Pot period is given in the preface to the American edition of his book, where he cites our condemnation of it and praises "the responsible attitude and precision of thought" shown in my writings on Cambodia. Note that I am referring to the American edition, not the simultaneous British edition, where these passages are eliminated and replaced by some remarkable lies, which have since been widely repeated; the two prefaces are dated the same day and the British edition is unavailable in the United States, where the lies would have been immediately exposed.

Subsequently, Herman and I devoted a chapter to Cambodia in volume 11 of our *Political Economy of Human Rights* (1979). We began by pointing out that "there is no difficulty in documenting major atrocities and repression, primarily from the reports of refugees" and that "the record of atrocities in Cambodia is substantial and often gruesome", continuing in this vein and noting finally that "when the facts are in, it may turn out that the more extreme condemnations were in fact correct", though, as a matter of simple logic, this would "in no way alter the conclusions we have reached on the central question addressed here: how the available facts were selected, modified, or sometimes invented to create a certain image offered to the general population".

The reason for the campaign of lies is that we documented a vast amount of fabrication of evidence, and contrasted widely publicised allegations with the quite different analysis of United States government specialists - who could hardly have been accused of being pro-Pol Pot in the period under review (largely 1975-77, since data about the later period was sparse at the time we wrote) and whose analyses in retrospect appear to have been fairly accurate. The context was extensive documentation of how the mainstream intelligence suppressed or justified the crimes of their own states during the same period. This naturally outraged those who feel that they should be free to lie at will concerning the crimes of an official enemy while concealing or justifying

those of their own states - a phenomenon that is, incidentally, far more significant and widespread than the debates about so-called "socialist" states that Johnson discusses, and correspondingly quite generally evaded. Hence the resort to the familiar technique that Johnson, among others, adopts.

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Massachusetts 02139.

## 'Hollywood's Vietnam'

Sir, - Poor Mr Adair (Letters, December 18). What can be done to console him? Not only does he get an unfavourable review from me (December 4), but now *Variety*, the trade publication of the US entertainment industry, has given him a two-column headline: "Anti-American Gilbert Adair's 'Vietnam' Book Laden with Error". The work, *Variety* writes, is "a poorly researched, frankly anti-American tract" in which "factual errors abound"; much of its content is "irrelevant"; and "even the most patient reader is likely to toss the book aside in exasperation". All of which will no doubt convince Mr Adair that America is an evil place indeed, bombing Hanoi, criticizing his book. There seems to be no end of it.

Try as I may, I find almost nothing coherent enough to debate in either Mr Adair's letter or that of his supporter Mr Callaghan. I have the sad suspicion that both are profound, if non-political, peacocks, a decade or so ago perhaps, but a revelation of the Antichrist - *Amerikal*. Since they have no predisposition to the empirical examination of new evidence, and since such a holistic revelation doesn't come along that often, after all, they are likely to eling to it for life.

Mr Callaghan's warning that "Vietnam is still too close for even the most detached historians to contemplate" is, with any objective certainty, is entertaining. All that right, Mr Callaghan. I made it all up: best people, Pol Pot's liquidations, the Vietnamese Gulag, Vietnam's invasions of Cambodia and Laos. His refusal to contemplate anything derogatory about Hanoi (he certainly is too open to anything favourable) is reminiscent of the extreme reluctance of certain people to entertain the notion that Joseph Stalin, for example, might be a bad person - until of course he was denounced by Khrushchev. Mr Callaghan will be horrified to hear that "revisionism" on Vietnam is proceeding in America at a most appalling rate, some of the most celebrated defenders of Hanoi having simply recanted.

Mr Adair's characterization of me as "extreme right-wing" is piquant, as if I were Charles Maurras or Alfred Rosenberg (does Mr Adair know these names?). In fact, I am about as right-wing as George Orwell. I plead guilty to anything, it is to a deep conviction that Western society has values worth defending - a conviction I am not certain Mr Adair or Mr Callaghan share. I suspect, whatever their reasons may be, that they are estranged, not only from America, but from Western society as a whole. The reason for their particular animus against the United States is not difficult to locate: it is the leading military power of the West.

Well, we Americans have been an emotional, headstrong people, Mr Adair, sending our armies hither and yon around the globe - to Britain (in 1942), to France, to Berlin, to Korea, to Vietnam - always with the fanfare, perhaps quite mistaken, that we were helping the world of John Kennedy, to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

We might not do it forever. If Mr Adair lives long enough he might see a world free of the influence of these crazed Americans. I leave him free to speculate as to whose influence

will replace theirs. A glance eastward to Poland might give him an inkling, but we should not be too hasty. Perhaps the era of universal peace and brotherhood will arrive. Perhaps the lion will lie down with the lamb.

RICHARD GRENIER,  
Apt 19A, 201 East 71st Street,  
New York, NY 10021.

## B. Traven

Sir, - Savkar Altinci (December 18) perpetrates at the same time an unnecessary complication and an unjustified simplification of the mystery of the writer B. Traven in the review of his novel *The Carreta*, which was incidentally first published in this country as long ago as 1936.

It is misleading to say that Will Wyatt and his BBC researchers have been "able to identify him as one Otto Wienecke, who had an earlier career as an actor and anarchist in Germany under the name of 'Rei Marut' before leaving Europe for good in the 1920s to start a new life as a novelist on the other side of the Atlantic". The surname of the real person whom Wyatt has identified with both Marut and Traven is actually Feige, since his father Adolf Feige married his mother Hormine Wienecke a few months after his birth. He was always called Otto Feige, and used his mother's maiden name only later as one of his many pseudonyms.

On the other hand, it should be said that, despite the brilliant investigations of Wyatt and his colleagues (and their predecessors), there is still no conclusive proof of the multiple identification, and there are still awkward gaps between the disappearance of Feige in 1904 and the appearance of Marut in 1907 and between the disappearance of Marut in 1924 and the appearance of Traven in Mexico in 1925. Perhaps something more definite will emerge in time for the centenary of his birth on February 23, 1922, but it seems unlikely.

NICOLAS WALTER,  
134 Northumberland Road,  
Harrow, Middlesex.

## 'Crystal Vision'

Sir, - Reviewing Gilbert Sorrentino's *Crystal Vision* (December 4), Valentine Cunningham writes: "Stories pack *Crystal Vision*; each of its chapters encloses a narrative, a fiction, a dream, obsession or fantasy." True enough. What the review does not note is that the seventy-eight chapters of Sorrentino's book correlate with the seventy-eight cards of the Tarot pack. The first twenty-two chapters go through the twenty-two Trumps Major in order, with The Fool (0) inserted between Judgment (20) and The World (21) in the manner described by A. B. Waite in his *Pictorial Key to the Tarot*. The remaining fifty-six chapters go through the four suits of the pack: Wands,

Cups, Swords, and Pentacles. The "narrative, fiction, dream, obsession or fantasy" of each chapter is inspired by and/or tropes with the image on the corresponding Tarot card. Since the Trumps Major and the suits cards are known as the Greater and the Lesser Arcana, respectively, it is not surprising that, as Cunningham writes, "*Arcane* is one of the Arab's favourite vocabularies; and given Sorrentino's oblique way with his sources, neither is it surprising that (*Cunningham again*) "his, and our, *arcana* are just too frequently not ... acidified."

I am not suggesting that a reading of Sorrentino's book in the light of its Tarot connection (I haven't done such a reading) and the text's negating self-reference (which Cunningham notices) would turn up a pot "meaning" that would enable us finally to expound and neatly to catalogue the work. I do think such a reading would reveal that the book has more order and less jumble than your reviewer implies. Sorrentino is one of the maddest post-modern fabulators, but he is also one of the most methodical.

LOUIS MACKKEY,  
Department of Philosophy, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712.

On the other hand, it should be said that, despite the brilliant investigations of Wyatt and his colleagues (and their predecessors), there is still no conclusive proof of the multiple identification, and there are still awkward gaps between the disappearance of Feige in 1904 and the appearance of Marut in 1907 and between the disappearance of Marut in 1924 and the appearance of Traven in Mexico in 1925. Perhaps something more definite will emerge in time for the centenary of his birth on February 23, 1922, but it seems unlikely.

ROS DE LANEROLLE,  
Women's Press, 124 Shoreditch High Street, London E1 6JE.

Sir, - "Is it too much to hope" (Jane Aiken Hodge, Letters, January 15) that under its new regime your paper will give significant books about pornography to pornographers for review?

KEITH WALKER,  
Flat N, 51 Ouilford Street, London WC1.

Charles I's Executioner

Sir, - I wonder if, during the course of all the archival research of the last thirty years, any of your readers have turned up any clues as to the identity of the man who headed Charles I?

According to a correspondent in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1767

## Women and Pornography

Sir, - In seeking to make light of a serious issue, J. G. Weightman (January 1) has brought the full weight of his intellect to bear upon a joke. Our logo, the steam iron, is not a "subconscious release". Were Professor Weightman more of an active participant in domestic labour, he would not fail to understand the pun. Were he to think more seriously about feminism, perhaps he would not fail to understand the metaphor, that our chains can be forged again as weapons - ploughshares into swords, if you like.

ROS DE LANEROLLE,  
Women's Press, 124 Shoreditch High Street, London E1 6JE.

Incidentally, according to Queen Henrietta Maria's chaplain, the headman "was said to be a minister" (quoted in J. O. Muddiman's *Trial of King Charles the First*, 1928). Henry Walker had as a young man been ordained a deacon, but was afterwards suspended, and his sacerdotal character cannot have been widely known. His headman William was a man of considerable education - the mathematical papers he left at his death were written in Latin (see *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 38, p. 10) - and as a man of education may well have acted as a regimental preacher in the army; equally the term "minister" might, in seventeenth-century usage, refer to his employment by Lambert.

JOHN SCHELLENBERGER,  
60 St Barnabas Road, Cambridge.

## Charles I's Executioner

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According to a correspondent in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1767

## Information, please

Sir, Charles Harding Firth (1857-1936), Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, 1904-25, whereabouts of any letters and papers, apart from those in the Bodleian; for a study of the historical profession in England.

J. P. Kenyon,  
Department of Modern History, University of St Andrews, Fife.

Hotels: any appropriate extracts on this topic, fiction, diaries, letters, poetry, or good anecdotes, for an anthology in preparation.

Hilary Rubinstein,  
61 Clarendon Road, London W11.

George Ives (1857-1950), poet and pedagogue, any information concerning possible representatives of his literary estate.

John Stokes,  
Department of English, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL.

Bernardo Neri, sixteenth-century Florentine and member of an embassy sent to Portugal by the Grand Duke Cosimo I of Tuscany (1569-71); any relevant information; for biography of Fernão Mendes Pinto (1510-83).

Rebecca Katz,  
300 South El Camino Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90212.

Thomas P. Puttick and William S. Simpson, first proprietors of the London auction firm, Puttick & Simpson, at 191 Piccadilly, 1846-59, at 47 Leicester Square, 1859-1937; any biographical information about them and subsequent owners during these periods; correspondence, papers, legal or business records; for a historical introduction to a study of their many sales of musical materials.

James Cover,  
Department of Music, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, New York 14214.

Conrad Russell (1878-1947): whereabouts of any letters written by him; for a collected edition.

Giorgiana Blakston,  
6 Markham Square, London SW3.

Cousins Russell, formerly Countess von Arnim, Elizabeth of Elizabeth and her German Garden: copies sought of her daughter, Lieke's biography of her mother, published under the pseudonym "Leslie de Charms", and "Elizabeth's" own autobiography, *All the Dogs in my Life*.

Penelope Mortimer,  
The Old Post Office, Chislehurst, London SE26 5JH.

Sir Shenton Thomas, Governor and Chief of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for the Malay States (1934-40); any significant material or personal recollections; for an authorized biography.

Brian Montgomery,  
11A The Gateways, London SW3.



# The Midwestern muse

By Harold Beaver

RONALD PRIMEAU:  
Beyond "Spoon River"  
The Legacy of Edgar Lee Masters  
217pp. University of Texas Press.  
\$14.60.  
0 292 70731 2

"The night is the prairie's odium,"  
sing Edgar Lee Masters in 1941.

It is the churchyard's rite,  
The night is the peace of sleeping herds  
Near falling Concord Church that stands  
A ruin above the prairie lands.

There is something ludicrous about  
that "odum" and singular "rune",  
turning to a "ruin" above the Illi-  
nois prairie. Though minutely en-  
dowed with a gift for language or  
rhythm even, Masters all his life  
affected the panache of a major  
poet. His early success with *Spoon  
River Anthology* (1915) clearly went  
to his head. This Chicago lawyer, in  
his concern for the disintegration of  
traditional communities and rural  
values, published over fifty further  
volumes, between 1916 and 1942.  
None of them has been much read.  
He was shrugged aside, just as  
Vachel Lindsay, whom he hailed as  
"America's greatest lyric poet", has  
been shrugged aside. He spirally  
withdrew to the Sangamon Valley  
his head crammed with Goethe,  
Shelley and Browning. In defiance of  
the social and literary momentum of  
the twentieth century. His final  
volumes were aptly published in  
Pleasant City, Illinois.

Most of the unpublished manu-  
scripts and drafts of published poems  
have been gathered in the Masters  
Collection of the University of Texas  
Library in Austin. Now, under the  
imprint of the University of Texas  
Press, Ronald Primeau has attempt-  
ed to restore Masters' reputation  
"beyond *Spoon River*". It is an uphill  
struggle. That mixture of half-baked  
philosophy and drearily provincial  
egotism will not attract many  
readers. There will always be those  
eager to penetrate at least as far as  
*The New Spoon River* of 1924. But  
this critical guide seems himself to be  
afflicted with a tin ear.

Take "Beethoven's Ninth Sym-  
phony and the King Cobra" (1932),  
presented as an ambitious epic. No-  
where does the critic wince at the  
cheer intransigence of the images:

## Romantic leanings

By Rupert Christiansen

ROGER ASSELINIAU:  
The Transcendentalist Constant in  
American Literature  
189pp. New York University Press.  
\$22.75 (paperback, \$9.10).  
0 8147 0572 3

The blurb claims this to be a work of  
"experiential originality", but a collection  
of essays which sets out "to  
isolate the fundamental Romanticism  
of American literature" would have  
to be profoundly eccentric to deserve  
that accolade — the theme has been  
pretty well done to death, one would  
have thought. In the forty-odd years  
since Matthiessen's *American Renais-  
sance*.

Roger Asselineau teaches Ameri-  
can literature in France, but he does  
not take advantage of the perspective  
this offers him. The essays are  
largely descriptive and narrative, and  
the critical technique, while it is not  
simple — most American novelists

are essentially poets, who write ro-  
mances rather than true novels —  
can become embarrassing — there  
are as many kinds of humor as there  
are shades of color in a rainbow".  
The first half of the book is con-  
cerned with Whitman, while the  
second meanders through Dreiser's  
verse, *Desire under the Elms*, *White-  
burg, Ohio*, Hemingway's "spiritual  
journey", and *A Streetcar Named De-  
sire* — following the slimiest of con-  
necting transcendentalist threads.  
There is nothing much to argue with,  
but the book's potential usefulness  
for sixth-formers is undermined by  
Asselineau's failure to deal with  
either Emerson or the European  
Romantics such as Novalis, Schell-  
ing, Coleridge and Carlyle, who  
provided the great part of the intel-  
lectual base for American Transcen-  
dentalism. Asselineau's last chapter  
deals with the forgotten Walter  
Lowenfels, who lived in Paris in the  
1920s where he was a friend of Mil-  
ler and Anais Nin, and who later  
became a staunch communist, suffer-  
ing under McCarthy. His Whit-  
manesque poetry has at least passing  
interest.

the city and are divided into those  
concerned mainly with literature or  
literary subjects and those which re-  
late literature and the city to another  
subject such as politics, history or  
education. The book contains con-  
tributions by Lawrence Ferlinghetti,  
Joyce Kilmer, Tom Morrison,  
Stephen Spender, Alfred Kazin, Les-  
lie Fiedler, James Baldwin, Chaim  
Potok and Bruno Bettelheim.

Nature is a sleeping spirit.  
Nature is a trance, a mass dragged by  
venom.  
A petrification, a solid jelly, a self-  
containment.

A contemplation which cannot arise from  
itself.  
Or get out of itself, or look upon itself.  
Man has escaped from this deep  
catalepsy:  
He has soared up, and can look  
down.

We are asked to respond to this  
Shelleyan mumbo-jumbo as an ecsta-  
sic breakthrough, even as "the  
rhythm of three bars changed to the  
rhythm of four bars" a kind of  
"scherzo". These may be notes for a  
poem, but they have not been fused  
or attained to an exultant synopa-  
sis — an "explosive flash" as he calls  
it in another awkwardly bastard  
phrase.

Ronald Primeau's vocabulary  
matches his author's in its incompe-  
tence. "Masters' prairie poems are  
photographs of the countryside", he  
writes, "penetrating to the hidden  
meanings of the mystic". Detail is  
"photographic", hills, fences, barns  
and schoolhouses come into view  
"album". But the value of these  
arrested images is never questioned.  
To what extent was Masters a Don  
Quixote tilting at "the circum-  
bient gas" (in T. E. Hulme's  
phrase)? To what extent was he  
absorbed in the spirit of Greece? To  
what extent was "his predilection to  
the classics and to mysticism" part  
of the "paradox of modernism"?  
Avalows of intent are not enough.  
Why should the embarrassing farrago  
of "Amphimixis" be equated with  
"Epipsychism"? Nothing ultimately  
rebutts Bernard Duffey's charge in  
*The Chicago Remembrance* in *Ameri-  
can Letters* (1954): "With the excep-  
tion of a few individual poems,  
perhaps a dozen in all, Masters' work  
was dull, tremendously garru-  
lous, and wholly unenlightened by  
the imaginative and dramatic sensi-  
tivity which had marked *Spoon River*."

Yet Masters launched his poems as  
epics "to interpret and memorialize  
Illinois and the country which bed  
given so many distinguished men to  
America". He himself memorialized  
Whitman and Vachel Lindsay as up-  
holders of a "spiritual" America that  
had given way to a "materialized"  
republic, just as "songs of liberty",  
smothered by materialism and the  
mercantile bureaucracy, had every-

where given way to "satire and  
anathema". "Budding Virgils and  
Homers" were nipped, but Juvenals  
grew up:

For resistance, not to say revolu-  
tion, is outlawed in America. Free  
speech is banned, and protesters  
must steal through the interplexus  
of things forbidden. To do that  
they must pick words which de-  
ceive the swine or which are re-  
garded by them as mere poetry  
and of no dangerous moment. All  
this has happened in America, and  
much of it since Whitman died.  
(1937)

That is why Masters bad it in for  
Mark Twain, who abandoned his na-  
tive Missouri for Connecticut, who  
Whitman, who played the philistine  
clown for cash, and made his living  
"by burlesquing the follies of the  
human race". Such a heritage suffo-  
cated exultant spirits, those mute  
inglorious Miltons of the Midwest  
who might turn out to be as volatile  
as Lindsay. Masters exonerated not  
only the "factory spirit" but the  
whole Judeo-Christian biblical tradi-  
tion on which (he argued) it was  
based. "In spite of New England  
theology America started under the  
influence of Hellas", he declaimed.  
"Thomas Jefferson's was the great

## Plotting against depravity

By Stephen Fender

DAVID S. REYNOLDS:  
Faith in Fiction  
The Emergence of Religious Litera-  
ture in America  
269pp. Harvard University Press.  
\$15.75.  
0 674 73901 9

The first full-length study of a new  
subject should please the serious  
scholar as much as the resourceful  
scholar who has developed it — al-  
ways assuming the "field" is really  
assuredly it. David Reynolds's field  
is a selective chronology, over 500 works  
of American religious fiction written  
between the Revolution and the Civil  
War. One serious reader would have  
been better pleased had the book  
been better written, but there is no  
doubting its importance, even if only  
as an expanded catalogue raisonné.

Mr Reynolds divides American  
religious fiction into seven categories  
ranging from early "oriental" and  
visionary tales, through fiction expos-  
ing the strengths and weaknesses of  
various Christian denominations, to  
series based on episodes in the  
Bible, late examples of which appear  
as *Ben Hur* and films by Cecil B.  
DeMille. The gist of the argument  
seems to be that American novelists  
avoided direct issues until such  
time as they came to make little  
difference in the everyday lives of  
their readers. The orientalist novel  
tradition going back through John-  
son and Voltaire to Giovanni Maria's  
*Turkish Spy* (1684), was used by writ-  
ters like Benjamin Franklin and  
Royall Tyler, not in order to con-  
front the harsh doctrine of Calvin-  
ism, but to displace it on to another  
level, of a general beneficence com-  
mon to all good religions — oriental  
faiths being commonly, though in-  
accurately, supposed to be less par-  
ticular about their doctrine.

But even novels addressing the  
issue of Calvinism promulgated good  
— an odd claim, considering the Cal-  
vinist's distrust of works. The hero of  
the *Reverend Elijah Sabin's Chorus*  
dren "are religious they ought not  
to be rude, but polished in their be-  
haviour." (So much for naughty  
Jesus, checking the doctors in the  
temple). Or else the doctrine takes  
place off the page, rather in the form  
of a Moral Reformation Day. To  
Reynolds's plot summary  
"The Reverend of *The Art of Counting*  
Bradford" experiments with various

mind and vision that tried to commit  
America to the beauty and the  
rationalism of Hellas." The rebirth  
of the Greek spirit, based on loving  
democracy, was to bond a nation  
without common blood, without  
common religion, without (pace  
baseball) common games even. *(The  
New World* (1937) puffed his popu-  
list theme:

The New World, too, with neither myths  
nor gods,  
With no traditions save those of the  
People.  
With never a theme distinctive, save the  
People.  
Must sing the People or go down to time  
As a nation songless.  
Or a nation which never found its soul.

That amarks of the thirties. Yet,  
in other respects, Masters had long  
outgrown his age. He was already  
forty-seven by the time *Spoon River  
Anthology* was published. At that  
moment, in 1915, he had caught the  
tide in his resistance to sentimental  
regionalism; caught a new form, too,  
in those free-verse epigrams interlac-  
ing to shape an elegy written in a  
Midwestern country churchyard. The  
inspiration may have come from  
MacKail's *Greek Anthology*, but the  
idea of epigrams as confessional  
monologues spoken by the deceased  
was original, as was the idea of the  
long poem as a dramatic mosaic of

anti-calvinist views — deism, Armi-  
nism, Universalism — before he is  
persuaded by Harriet to accept the  
orthodox doctrine of predestination  
and total depravity. Rescued both by  
his love for Harriet and by God's  
"free and sovereign grace", Damon at  
last marries Harriet and becomes a  
Congregationalist minister. The  
same feature can be observed in  
novels written against the Calvinists.  
In *The Recollections of Jotham  
Anderson* (1824) Henry Ward Beecher  
his hero struggle to validate Unitar-  
ianism over two "long and painful"  
years. Refusing (to put it in the only  
words in Reynolds's book that could  
be described as wry) to give "sam-  
ples of his scholarship on this pivotal  
subject", Jotham declares with a cer-  
tain insouciance, "It would take too  
much room to detail the progress of  
my experience at this time."

Perhaps Calvinist doctrine was too  
insubstantial, except in the intricate  
arguments of Jonathan Edwards, to  
be made the stuff of fiction, or  
inevitably its avoidance is part of  
the logic of novels, which will  
go on paying attention to human  
behaviour at the expense of theo-  
retical motivation. Reynolds does not

say which alternative he favours in  
any case his judgment is not in  
ways to be trusted. On the well-  
known case of Maria Monk's *Awful  
Disclosures* (1836), which alleged  
torture and infanticide in the beas-  
tial of a Montreal nunnery, and  
shown to be an imposture after  
surprisingly belated inquiry, he  
writes, "If Maria Monk had not  
the exact truth, she had at least  
produced a fictional satire on re-  
ligion". By the same token, the  
*Locals of the Elders of Zion* could  
be described as a fictional satire on  
Judaism.

If Reynolds is to deserve his de-  
scription in the blurb as "a historian  
of American literature and culture",  
he must learn to tell a fiction from  
fact. In his defence, though, it must  
be said that the sheer amount of his  
material would make it hard for any  
one to discriminate in every case.  
Alone emerge with an arresting ac-  
count, pulling it all together, is  
numerous plot summaries and pos-  
sible taxonomies occasionally offend  
the reader with unassimilable detail,  
he at least presents a mass of data  
which stronger-minded critics can  
do to work.

## Hollywood sequel

By Peter Kemp

NOEL POLK:  
Faulkner's Requiem for a Nun  
A Critical Study  
273pp. Indiana University Press.  
\$10.50.  
0 253 13302 5

Noel Polk believes that *Requiem for  
a Nun*, generally regarded as "a sim-  
ple" — indeed, "simple-minded" —  
novel, is really "a major work in the  
Faulkner canon". He largely rests his  
case on the claim that Gertrude Stew-  
art's "not, as has been thought, the  
book's moral arbiter but actually the  
villain of the piece. If he can carry  
this point, Polk seems to feel, he can  
rescue the novel from the judgment  
that it is inferior and simplistic."

His alert perusal of the text — and  
its origins and drafts — supplies much  
that is valuably thought-provoking.  
But, for all the ingenious back-  
biting of Stevens' motives and the  
unwinding of Temple Drake's be-  
haviour, Polk's often elaborately  
apologetic interpretations don't con-  
vincingly reverse customary assess-  
ments of what the book is saying.

say which alternative he favours in  
any case his judgment is not in  
ways to be trusted. On the well-  
known case of Maria Monk's *Awful  
Disclosures* (1836), which alleged  
torture and infanticide in the beas-  
tial of a Montreal nunnery, and  
shown to be an imposture after  
surprisingly belated inquiry, he  
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count, pulling it all together, is  
numerous plot summaries and pos-  
sible taxonomies occasionally offend  
the reader with unassimilable detail,  
he at least presents a mass of data  
which stronger-minded critics can  
do to work.

Even if they did, he would still be  
some way from displaying that let  
neglected masterpiece. As disas-  
trophically as the book's moral crudities  
Polk tries to argue away) are all  
too obviously a sequel to *Sig-  
nory*. *Requiem for a Nun* seems to  
emerge from the centre of a series  
of new-readers-now-read-on re-  
production. And — an excursion to  
Faulkner's part into not merely dra-  
ma, but melodrama — it is also dis-  
tinguished by a coarse smartness, mo-  
lodramatic to Hollywood taste. Yet  
Faulkner canon. Snapping out  
her "touchés" and "Oh Gods", he-  
larily toying with cigarettes and  
drinks, Temple Drake especially  
"solange" in an open far coat  
brilliant and tense" — recalls  
Davis — in some chromatic  
wasp. A considerable part of the  
case against the novel, this is surely  
something that an advocate of it  
Professor Polk should take into  
account.

The long years of persecution by  
his contemporaries began; and he  
developed — a speech impediment  
which he overcame, lapsing into  
"petrified statements" whenever he  
was ill-at-ease, his thought appar-  
ently outpacing his words. But he also  
developed two lines of defence  
which, equally, never deserted him.  
Knotted up by his rage as he was  
built, and gagged by his own in-  
coherence under stress, he would re-  
collect his emotions, to controlled  
anger not quite approaching tranquil-  
lity and, once he had escaped, would  
caricature his musings opponents in  
blatantly humorous, juvenile  
which he then distributed as broad-  
sheets. Partly as a result of the exer-  
cise he was top of his class in English  
long before his talent for mathemat-  
ics became obvious; and he also  
found that his personal time and  
space began to empty of practical  
troubles and demand to be filled  
with other lives of thought.

Motherless from the age of seven,  
almost orphaned at school, he turned  
for comfort to the self-contained,  
theatrical, ordered and provable

## Illuminating the universe

By Redmond O'Hanlon

IVAN TOLSTOY:  
James Clerk Maxwell  
A Biography  
183pp. Edinburgh: Canongate. £9.95.  
0 86241 010 X

It was really a frog that kicked the  
old world of physics to pieces. In one  
reversed leap, the skinned right back  
leg of *Rain Latetis*, contrived as a  
result of discharge from an electric  
machine in Galvani's laboratory, sig-  
nalled the end of the visual, literary,  
theological physics whereby the  
commensal concerns of man and  
his geometer God had once been  
obviously applicable to a contained  
cosmos. The very odd and hitherto  
neglected man who, above all others,  
brought about the revolution whose  
imagination set limits to Newton's  
universe and provided the theoretical  
stimulus of Einstein's, is the elusive  
subject of this small but impressive  
biography.

James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879),  
with an early choice of researches  
which he never thereafter aban-  
doned, conducted his first experi-  
ment when he was two years old.  
Beginning his investigation into op-  
tics, he was characteristically bold in  
the announcement of his first result.  
Placing his plate at an angle to the  
lines of light radiating through the  
window into his bedroom, he dis-  
covered a bright spot to be dancing  
across the walls at his command.  
"It's the sun" he cried. "I got it with  
the tin plate!"

Born into the Scottish landed gen-  
try, the only son of middle-aged  
parents who doted on him and  
recorded his every precocious move  
with delight, he always had abundant  
opportunities for exploration. His  
interest in classical mechanics began  
early: "He is a very happy man", his  
mother wrote to her sister, "he has  
great work with doors, locks, keys,  
etc., and 'show me how it does' is  
never out of his mouth... As to the  
bells, they will not rust; the stand-  
sentry in the kitchen, and Mag runs  
thro' the house ringing them all by  
turns, or he rings, and sends Bessy  
to see and shout to let him know,  
and he drags papa all over to show  
him the holes where the wires go  
through."

But the small disadvantages of  
privilege soon became apparent, too.  
His father, a good, kind, diffident  
inventor with an aristocratic diffidence  
to appearances and a Calvinist  
belief in an honest declaration of  
function and purpose, who liked to  
design all the objects that he used,  
from his own trousers to his own  
house, proudly sent his son to the  
Edinburgh Academy in a sensible,  
quasi-indestructible, wholly appalling  
pair of square-toed boots with par-  
allel, reinforced bronze straps, start-  
lingly at variance with the current  
fashion amongst conformist school-  
boys, and, indeed, so deeply original  
as to be unlike any other footwear  
seen since man began to make pic-  
torial records of himself.

The long years of persecution by  
his contemporaries began; and he  
developed — a speech impediment  
which he overcame, lapsing into  
"petrified statements" whenever he  
was ill-at-ease, his thought appar-  
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ics became obvious; and he also  
found that his personal time and  
space began to empty of practical  
troubles and demand to be filled  
with other lives of thought.

Motherless from the age of seven,  
almost orphaned at school, he turned  
for comfort to the self-contained,  
theatrical, ordered and provable

truths of geometry. And he dis-  
covered, to his delight, that the great  
artificial game, whose rules had been  
so intricately constructed over twenty-  
three centuries, was absurdly easy  
to play. He could see the dance of  
moving figures in hypothetical space  
as clearly as the sunspot on his own  
nursery wall. His life was trans-  
formed.

In June, 1844, he writes to his  
father "I have made a tetrahedron, a  
dodecahedron, and two other hed-  
rons whose names I don't know", at  
fourteen, besides reading Hobbes  
(he is marginally outclassed here by  
Einstein, who at thirteen had mus-  
tered Kant's *Critique of Pure  
Reason*) he had produced his first  
piece of original research, a discus-  
sion of ovals in which he successfully  
generalized the theory of the ellipse.  
His paper was presented for him at  
the April meeting of the Royal Socie-  
ty of Edinburgh, and his method of  
constructing the requisite curves was  
judged to be simpler than the one  
scheme used by Descartes. His official  
career had begun.

In the holidays he would retreat to  
his laboratory in the family home at  
Glenlair:  
I have regularly set up shop now  
above the wash-house at the gate,  
in a garret. I have an old door set  
on two barrels, and two chairs, of  
which one is safe, and a skylight  
above, which will slide up and  
down.

On the door (or table) there is a  
lot of bowls, jugs, plates, jam pigs  
[jars] etc., containing water, salt,  
soda, sulphuric acid, blue vitriol,  
plumbago ore; also broken glass,  
iron, and copper wire, copper and  
zinc plate, bees' wax, sealing wax,  
clay, rosin, charcoal. A lens, a  
Smees's Galvanic apparatus, a discus-  
sion of original research, a discus-  
sion of ovals in which he successfully  
generalized the theory of the ellipse.  
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ty of Edinburgh, and his method of  
constructing the requisite curves was  
judged to be simpler than the one  
scheme used by Descartes. His official  
career had begun.

July 6. To-day I have set on to the  
copping of the jam pig which I  
polished yesterday. I have stuck in  
the wires better than ever, and it is  
going on at a great rate, being a  
rainy day, and the skylight shut  
and a small of hydrogen gas. I  
have left it for an hour to read  
Poisson, as I am pleased with him  
today. He tells lies about the way  
people make barometers, etc.

Maxwell had already developed his  
own creative methods of problem  
solving ("I did not find the imped-  
iment till I had dreamt over it prop-  
erly, I consider the best mode of  
resolving difficulties of a particular  
kind") and a clear idea of the proper  
relations of science and social life:  
"Where at table he often seemed ab-  
stracted from what was going on,  
being absorbed in observing the  
effects of refracted light in the finger-  
glasses, or in trying some experi-  
ment, making invisible stereos-  
copes, and the like." Cambridge  
was clearly the place for such a man.

So after three years at Edinburgh  
University, Maxwell transferred to  
Peterhouse, and then to Trinity in  
search of the best mathematical  
training, which the English-speaking  
world appeared to offer. The qualifi-  
cation is necessary, because it then  
seemed that the centre of mathemat-  
ical research might be in danger of  
moving to the Continent, to Ger-  
many (Bessel; Gauss), to Switzerland  
(Buler, the Bernoullis) or to France  
(most impressive of all — Lagrange,  
Laplace, Poisson, Cauchy, Fourier,  
Poisson). But it was seen at once in  
Cambridge that a new British star  
had arrived. A fellow student re-  
members his tutor:

talking to me this evening about  
Maxwell. He says he is unques-  
tionably the most extraordinary  
man he has met within the whole  
range of his experience; he says it

appears impossible for Maxwell to  
think incorrectly on physical sub-  
jects. He looks upon him as a  
great genius, with all his eccentricities,  
and prophecies that one day  
he will shine as a light in physical  
science.

His rooms festooned with the new  
familiar companions of his thinking,  
from his bits of magnetized steel to  
his pieces of boiled beetle, he would  
work with great intensity late into  
the night, and then from "2 to 2.30  
a.m. he took exercise by running  
along the upper corridor, down the  
stairs, along the lower corridor, and  
then up the stairs, and so on, until  
the linnets along his track got up  
and lay *perdu* behind their sport-  
ing doors to have shots at him with  
boots, hair-brushes, etc., as he  
passed." But despite his odd habits,  
his spasmodic speech and his broad  
Scottish accent, a contemporary, T.M.  
Butler (later Master of Trinity), re-  
membered that "His position among  
us... was unique. He was the one  
acknowledged man of genius among  
the undergraduates. We understood  
even then that, though barely of age,  
he was in his own line of inquiry not a  
beginner but a master. His name was  
already familiar to men of science.  
If he lived, it was certain that he  
would be one of the small but sacred  
band to whom it would be given to  
enlarge the bounds of human know-  
ledge."

He became a member of The  
Apostles; he was Second Wrangler in  
1854; and he was elected to a Fel-  
lowship at Trinity the following year.  
"I am in great haste," he wrote to  
his aunt, "having but 2 hours, and  
am able to read the rest of the day,  
so I have made a big hole in some  
subjects I wish to know... A night-  
gale has taken up his quarters  
just outside my window, and works  
away every night. He is at it very  
fierce now. At night the owls relieve  
him, softly sighing after their  
fashion."

Maxwell, too, worked fiercely  
every night. He published a paper out-  
lining his analysis of colour percep-  
tion which established the basis of  
modern colorimetry and which, like  
his explanation of Saturn's rings, his  
contribution to the theory of fluids  
and solids, or the work which led to  
his claim, with Boltzmann, to be the  
founding father of modern statistical  
mechanics, only now seem of a  
routine brilliance by comparison with  
his mainstream work which suc-  
ceeded or accompanied it. For in  
1855 he seriously and systematically  
began to develop the mathematical  
mechanisms which, by 1864, had en-  
abled him to produce his extraordinary  
illumination of the structure of  
the universe; which allowed him to  
redefine space from its emptiness; to  
make electricity, a quirky group of  
phenomena on the distant margins of  
experience, pointing lodestars,  
amber rods inspired by the static  
lightning-mallet and magnetized  
spoons of a Sheffield merchant, into  
a quantity as fundamental as mass;  
to deconstruct absolute measurements  
and absolute times; and to usher in  
the far cosmic framework of our  
modern world, as well as its near,  
atomic infinites.

In the eighteenth century, Galvani  
had scribbled the kick of the frog's  
leg in his Bologna laboratory to  
some kind of biological current, but  
as Alessandro Volta was to deal with  
the immediate problems posed by  
the principle of the battery. The leg mus-  
cle was merely acting as a fluid layer  
between two metals — and a con-  
tinuous current could be generated  
simply by placing a damp cloth be-  
tween a zinc and a copper plate. This  
discovery made the quantitative  
study of currents possible and so  
opened the way to the eventual syn-  
thesis of the study of electricity, with  
that of magnetism. In 1820, Ørsted  
placed his compass next to a current-  
carrying wire and observed the de-  
flection of its needle. André Marie  
Ampère then set about measuring  
and calculating the magnetic forces  
generated by electric currents and  
eventually formulated a theory which  
led James Clerk Maxwell to describe  
him as the "Newton of Electricity".

Maxwell knew that there is no  
particular reason why our brains,  
which have evolved (or, as he would  
have said, been created) to deal with  
the immediate problems posed by  
our mundane surroundings, should  
be equipped to provide a true de-  
scription of nature beyond the reach  
of our senses. But as he wrote in an  
essay for the Apostles: "That accel-  
eration to exist is plain in the  
face of things, for all parabolas,  
fables, similes, metaphors, tropes,  
and figures of speech are analogies,  
natural or revealed, artificial or  
conventional. Neither is there any ques-  
tion as to the occurrence of analogies  
to our minds. They are as plain as  
reasons, not to say blackberries." They  
certainly remained as plain as  
blackberries to Maxwell, dotted all  
over his thicket of algebraic explora-  
tion, and although "the whole  
framework of science, up to the very  
pinpoints of philosophy," sometimes

Building mathematically on Far-  
aday's experimental work, Maxwell  
was driven to conclude in his four-  
part paper "On Physical Lines of  
Force", which appeared in the *Philos-  
ophical Magazine* for 1861-62 — and  
in forgivably excited italics — that  
"Light consists in the transverse  
undulations of the same medium which  
is the cause of electric and magnetic  
phenomena". "To few men in the  
world has such an experience been  
vouchsafed" an admiring and envious  
Einstein said of this discovery, and  
as P.G. Tait wrote of Maxwell's elu-  
cidation of the laws of electrodyn-  
amics, it remains "One of the most  
splendid monuments ever raised by  
the genius of a single individual."

Maxwell became Professor of  
Natural Philosophy at Aberdeen in  
1856 and married the daughter of his  
college Principal in 1858. "James"  
pronounced his aunt, "has lived  
hitherto at the gate of heaven." Still,  
his work suffered no decline, and  
indeed, Mrs Maxwell may well have  
unwittingly preserved his lucid con-  
tinuity. She was heard to protest at a  
Cambridge party, "James, you're be-  
gining to enjoy yourself. It is time  
we go home." He was all too con-  
scious, in any case, of the dangers of  
prolonged psychic exposure to an  
empty and indifferent cosmos. "It is  
in personal union with my friends"  
he wrote to R.B. Litchfield, "that I  
hope to escape the despair which  
belongs to the contemplation of the  
outward aspect of things with human  
eyes."

He would also escape in his let-  
ters, in occasional Dickensian carica-  
ture of his Glenlair neighbours where  
one literary widow was to be found,  
his days, "chattering never so wisely,  
with her hair about her ears and her  
elbows on her knees, on a low stool,  
talking Handel, or Ruskin, or  
Macaulay, or general paths of un-  
protected femininity, passing off into  
Christian witicism, pleasant unlit-  
tered along, sporting and betting."  
He and his wife would read Chaucer,



Sir James Clerk Maxwell painted posthumously by R. H. Campbell in 1929 for the Institution of Electrical Engineers, London. On the table is the revolving coil apparatus, designed by Lord Kelvin, with which, in 1863, the first determination of the value of the ohm in electrostatic units was made by Maxwell himself working with Balfour Stewart and Fleming Jenkin.

This was the foundation of the mod-  
ern view, described by Ivan Tolstoy  
with characteristic lucidity and econ-  
omy, that "this magnetic properties  
of matter are due to the action of  
huge numbers of molecular mag-  
netic atoms, in which submicro-  
scopic electric currents are perpetually  
flowing in closed circuits, creating  
elementary magnetic fields." Yet if  
electricity generates magnetic forces  
the converse, it would seem, should  
also be true — and in the late summer  
and autumn of



Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton together in the evenings, and then start again at the beginning. He was fluent in French, German and Italian "although, for some reason", his biographer reassures us, "he had difficulty with Dutch".

He moved to King's College, London, in 1850, to the vacant chair of Physics and Astronomy, but resigned five years later in order to concentrate on his own work and on the management of his 6,000 acres at Glenlair - where a special letter box was "sunk into the wall of the abutment of the bridge across the Urr" to receive his incoming scientific correspondence and to hold his increasingly frequent outgoing papers - until he was finally recalled to Cambridge to set up the Cavendish Laboratory. There is one last, fine contemporary account of Maxwell at work in the new department which he had founded, and to which he walked every day accompanied by his dog Toht.

When working... or when thinking about a problem, he had a habit of whistling, not loudly, but in a half-subdued manner, no particular tune discernible, but a sort of running accompaniment to his inward thoughts. He could carry the full strength of his mental faculties rapidly from one subject to another, and could pursue his studies under distinctions which most students would find intolerable, such as a loud conversation in the room where he was at work. On those occasions he used, in a manner, to take his dog into his confidence, and would softly "Toht, Toht", at intervals, and at time, would let stay just for example, "It must be so, Plato (i.e. Plato), thou reasonest well." He would then join in the conversation.

He died, as precociously as he had intellectually begun to live, at a mere forty-three, killed by the same kind of stomach cancer which had deprived him of his mother.

Ivan Tolstoy has written a very

good popular biography which, with Lewis Campbell and W. Garnett's indispensable *The Life of James Clerk Maxwell* (1882), and C.W.F. Everitt's more technical *James Clerk Maxwell, Physicist and Natural Philosopher* (1975), will become part of the essential reading about an almost inaccessible man whose imagination and mathematical virtuosity filled once empty space with jostling fields of force, with bundles of invisible wires binding the stronger the tighter and closer they were bunched together, with the muscle fibres of the planetary system (and, eventually, with the vast spaces within the atom). It is served with a modest index and with a small but accurate summary of the all-too-few scholarly works about Maxwell - he was a scientist too revolutionary, after all, too brilliant and too original, to be understood by more than five or six of his contemporaries.

One of the thirteen black-and-white plates movingly points the contrast with that other scientific titan of the nineteenth century: today Glenlair house, half-gutted by fire, roofless, broken-backed, decays uncelebrated, while Downe House, a fitting memorial to its supposedly reviled but in fact admired and thoroughly necessary patriarch, Charles Darwin, is meticulously preserved. And as the winds from the Rhinns of Kells blow across the abandoned graveyard and the ruined chapel near the village of Purton, in Galloway, where James Clerk Maxwell lies buried, Darwin is honoured in Westminster Abbey. Still, one small comfort is that neither of these great men had surplus intellectual or emotional energy left from their vast labours to care half a sigh for their future standing. And one large comfort is that somewhere there may be another two year old, perhaps, catching the sun with his tin plate, or deconstructing his electromagnetic space invader machine with yells of delight, who will a few decades hence, and with the same combination of finesse and industry and apparently effortless elegance, unify, for us, general relativity and quantum mechanics.

## Setting the social scene

By William Coleman

G. S. ROUSSEAU and ROY PORTER

(Editors)

*The Ferment of Knowledge: Studies in the Historiography of Eighteenth-Century Science*  
500pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£25.  
0 521 22599 X

The history of science is aboil and its affairs, the more programmatic enthusiasts in this volume declare, have recently been or soon will be totally transformed. One of the editors, George S. Rousseau, however, admits a different perspective: "All this radical alteration" in the proclaimed scholarly purpose and, especially, methods of the history of science "is ultimately linguistic. That is, [it] is that one language has been substituted for another, in this case for the language of the social sciences." This intuition is no doubt correct, if limited, and it is useful information for the reader of certain essays in *The Ferment of Knowledge* that aim to teach us our new business.

The worry on the brow of the contemporary historian of science is not a new one. Recent years have heard renewed appeals for liberation from the seeming constraints of the proud intellectual standards of the scientists themselves. They may conceive their enterprise as an eminently, even exclusively rational undertaking, but historians, it appears, know better. They must recognize that natural science, being only an "esoteric sub-culture", stands desperately in need of description and analysis as an historically situated cultural enterprise. Contextualism must transcend, happily, drive out intellectualism, and it must be the new contextualism, drawing upon the social sciences, and not the old, which found its context only in other intellectualist and hence suspect retreats (philosophy, religion, the occult).

The historian of science must adopt principles and methods from sociology and anthropology and, a less specific but important matter, be more sensitive also to political considerations, for politics penetrates the substance of scientific thought as well as translating scientific conclusions for social consumption. A contextualist history of science insists that pure "natural knowledge" does not exist and never has existed. Context, of course, is social and it is groups which produce knowledge just as they produce other goods. Goods also possess their own dynamics and generate distinctive patterns of behaviour.

Thus will the history of science make its escape from the weary confines of Great Scientists, Victorians of Reason and the Benevolence of Science. Thus it will avoid the sort of fate awaiting diplomatic, political and not least intellectual history, methodologically sterilized by their orientation towards personalities, and thus also be armed boldly to face the fact that the world of natural science constitutes, indeed an entire subculture and one deeply involved in the affairs of the mind though not uniquely defined thereby.

The purpose of this volume is to exhibit new approaches to the history of science during the Enlightenment and to describe and evaluate methods appropriate to the new task. Most of the dozen essays attend carefully to this objective. A few authors, peacefully asleep on familiar seas, have simply written technical reports or have summarized without additional comment recent understanding of eighteenth-century events; here the historiographic content is small or altogether absent. Contextual history claims to be, of course, the persistent element, even though Roy Porter disconcertingly opens the discussion by asserting that "the enlightenment was nothing but an intellectual movement" - for whose appreciation social context is both vague and irrelevant. An untidely collected, perhaps, and one immediately corrected by Simon

Shaffer and Steven Shapin. These authors, writing with great earnestness, tell us precisely what the new contextual history must be and how it is to be done; they also inform us of the significance and urgency of the cause.

Shaffer insists that eighteenth-century "natural philosophy" must not be construed as a unique or uniquely scientific discourse. Furthermore, historians' insistence on the influence of Newton has created the monolith called Newtonianism, which in turn has tended to define virtually all the dimensions of science during the early Enlightenment. *The Ferment of Knowledge*, it is (Newtonian) matter theory that commands particular attention. Efforts merely to preserve the centrality of matter theory, by bringing to bear upon it ever more disparate elements of scholarship, are, Shaffer urges, inadequate. They only perpetuate without further examination the over-intellectualized unity of Newtonianism. It is, in fact, just that unity that is in question or, more precisely, which the advocates of a coherent natural philosophy of the Enlightenment must test and demonstrate to be a reality. The appeal to sociological and anthropological perspectives introduces promising but still problematic choices, for now biographical elements return and the role of individual or collective cosmologies must be dealt with. Seemingly, Shaffer is discontented with this work also. Though offering no considered programme of his own, he ends his argument with a sharp juxtaposition of means for assaying (and creating) scientific statements: reason speaks and culture accommodates, or scientific validity is itself a cultural product, an element in the social exercise of power (thus Michel Foucault) - and then insists that "a choice of historical methods in science is a choice of attitudes to the relation of science and social relations." For historians of science this probably means that the only choice forbidden to them is to ignore or fall to emphasize these social relations.

In a theoretically more explicit vein, in which matter theory is again given great prominence (the volume in general tends to emphasize thought and institutions), Shapin pours another bag of much the same cement over the feet of intellectualist historians. Students of the scientific enterprise are reminded that that enterprise is the "social use" of science, must be understood as applying in two directions. That science provides the terms for social apologetics as well as practical action is widely acknowledged; that society in turn exerts obvious and in many cases less than obvious influences upon not only the institutional structure of science but upon its methods and substantive conclusions, is a less common conclusion of the volume. Shapin does not explore this latter claim by bringing in new evidence but states his directions using the existing literature (notably, works by Margaret Jacob and Theodore M. Brown). Social uses thus translate into social interests. "Institutionalized representations of nature" (longhand for what, we may suppose, is also called natural science) play a legitimizing or critical function in our society; they are intrinsic to the holding and exercise of political and economic power; ideas have consequences.

Yet these are crimes that promise to pay. Overlooking the portentous tone of certain essays here, and also those inevitable but infrequent moments when the ferment of science is decidedly quiet, readers may be gratified to find that the editors and publishers for this production, a volume of major scholarly and general importance. The authors recreate a world that in recent years has not received the attention that is its due, and all students of European science and society will have to attend to the suggestions offered by this rewarding collection. One may hope, too, that *The Ferment of Knowledge* will work upon the imagination and the labours of others whose view of the Enlightenment has yet serious scope to acknowledge the general importance of the character and institutions of eighteenth-century natural science.

Perhaps, then, the history of science is to become, as some have maintained, the principal historical discipline, capitalizing on the central place that natural science has held in western culture since the start of the Enlightenment. But if such important dreams have their appeal, let us recognize that the beginning will be more modest. John L. Heilbrunn provides an admirably vivid description of a research programme which promises to display the scientist to his most intimate social setting, namely, confronting natural phenomena by means of instruments, laboratories, and institutions, the very means, each with its "social dimension", by which systematic human conduct is maintained with obscure (in this case, electrical) events. Other essays attend more to the patterns and problems of the historical literature regarding eighteenth-century science. An unkind and bumpy decision has ensued the ample attention is devoted to the life and earth sciences. William F. Bynum's essay on medicine and Roy S. Porter's on the earth sciences are models of the thematic presentation of current research interests; they also suggest how many problems demand further or even initial consideration (by no means all of them) the contextualist. Jacques Roger's very spare discussion of biology is also rich in such possibilities. Other essays deal with epistemology, psychology, mathematics, cosmology, chemistry and technology and industrialization. The book as a whole offers guidance to the scholarly literature unavailable from any other source; and for this reason alone *The Ferment of Knowledge* is an essential bibliographical tool for anyone with even a passing interest in the period.

Few topics are altogether neglected. One, an important one, which receives too little attention is the continuity of the classical. Ancient writers continued to dominate the medical curricula in Enlightenment universities, and textbooks by no means always reflected the achievements of the moderns. Only gradually did the vernacular replace Latin. *The Ferment of Knowledge*, contextual engine though it pretends to be, pays scant attention to those paramount instruments of the socialization of scientific activity: the school, the university and the academy. Contextualism, moreover, has not only preserved the traditional divisions in its chapter-headings but has entirely overlooked the great anti-intellectualist himself, amazingly, the passions and loud complaints of J.-J. Rousseau and his kind make no appearance at all.

From a book such as this, wherein the aspirations and deceptions of a scholarly discipline are made wonderfully plain, the cynical reader may well conclude that historians of science have no clothes of their own. Clad in ancient tatters, they are now caught ransacking the closets of others, seeking, it appears, both cover and legitimization. How true this is and how common to virtually all domains of contemporary humanistic scholarship! And how quaint! All be man thought and conduct is rationalized save that, of the classics themselves, whose models in the sciences themselves arose from and reflect the rationalistic ideals of the earlier natural sciences.

Yet these are crimes that promise to pay. Overlooking the portentous tone of certain essays here, and also those inevitable but infrequent moments when the ferment of science is decidedly quiet, readers may be gratified to find that the editors and publishers for this production, a volume of major scholarly and general importance. The authors recreate a world that in recent years has not received the attention that is its due, and all students of European science and society will have to attend to the suggestions offered by this rewarding collection. One may hope, too, that *The Ferment of Knowledge* will work upon the imagination and the labours of others whose view of the Enlightenment has yet serious scope to acknowledge the general importance of the character and institutions of eighteenth-century natural science.

## Maestro of the lost soul

By John Warrack

A. DEAN PALMER:  
*Heinrich August Marschner 1795-1861*  
612pp. Bowker. £32.75.  
0 8357 1114 5

It has been Heinrich Marschner's fate to languish in a pigeon-hole, labelled as a transitional figure between Weber and Wagner, occasionally taken out and dusted down for a production of *Der Vampyr* or *Hans Heiling*, then once again filed and forgotten.

The truth is more complex. For a bridge between himself and Weber, he was perfectly capable of drawing on his deep and loving knowledge of Weber, indeed, indeed of ransacking all the French *opéra-comiques* and early German Romantic operas which thronged the repertoire of his youth in order to feed his predatory genius. His knowledge of Marschner was fairly comprehensive (he even composed an extra aria for *Der Vampyr*), and his idiom was enriched by certain devices he had admired. Without the Mountain Queen's appearance in *Hans Heiling*, Brünnhilde's *Todesverkündigung* would have taken different shape; when Ruthven, the Vampyr, interrupts Emmy singing the ballad about "der bleiche Mann", we cannot now avoid thinking of Senta's ballad being interrupted by another "bleiche Mann", the Flying Dutchman; and though she has a touch of Eurydice, it was Rebecca, weiting anxiously for her champion in *Der Tempel und die Jüdin*, who suggested the mood of Elsa waiting for the mysterious Lohengrin.

None of these moments, each of them typical of Marschner's imagination, owes much to Weber; and the ways in which Marschner certainly did try to imitate Weber, such as in the construction of his overtures, bled little of interest for Wagner. Even Marschner's chromatic harmony, which Dean Palmer sees as a source for some of Wagner's, has precedents, in Spohr and some of

Weber, for example; though certainly Marschner's attempts to develop continuously composed opera - as so often with him, more interesting for the intention than the achievement - could be said to lie somewhere between Eurydice and *The Flying Dutchman*.

Mr Palmer goes into the details of Marschner's construction of complete operatic acts in his two brief chapters on "Style and Contribution to the History of Opera", also spelling out methodically the new roles Marschner gave to some of the old ingredients of opera - Lied, aria, Romanza, Preghiera, melodrama and so on. His concern to establish patterns of how many times solos come with chorus or recitatives with ensembles, and so on; indeed, after one particularly exhausting bout of these lists, he is forced to admit that such categorization is "always fraught with difficulties" and might have been differently done by someone else.

It is, indeed, a great pity that he has not felt able to rise above an evident wish to prove his diligence every turn, and to forget the ghost of some PhD supervisor breathing down his neck so as really to write the book he could. More than half

his 600-odd pages are given over to notes, appendices and vast tables and lists of the sources he has consulted. It is really not necessary to show your workings in the margin like this. Some of his digressions suggest a similar anxiety to demonstrate thoroughness with the homework: there is not the slightest point in a whole chapter on Marschner's relations and descendants, and it is difficult to see how a discussion of *Der Vampyr* is helped by illustrations, with zoological explanation, of the bats *Phyllostoma spectum*, *Desmodus rufus*, and, particularly ugly to customer, *Desmodus rotundus*. I do see, though, that it was hard to resist telling us of ice-cream bars and cereals called "Count Dracula's Deadly Secret" and "Count Chocula" (with footnote reference).

Palmer's thoroughness is at its most rewarding not only in establishing the details of Marschner's career, which he does with an accuracy and completeness unmatched in the German literature, but in demonstrating, with full synopses, how the literary originals were fashioned into librettos - often, he is well aware, thoroughly unsatisfactory ones. Elaborate plots thronged with too many characters presented Mars-

chner with a task he seems time and again to have failed to recognize as virtually impossible. The vampire Ruthven, Hans Heiling and Boissier in *Der Tempel* dominate his operas, and help to make them Marschner's finest, largely because he had a particular feeling for the tragic villain, the *dame damnée* torn between good and evil. There was the example of Lysistrata in *Eurydice*, and Marschner's three major characters bequeath something to the Flying Dutchman; but they are original and dramatically satisfying inventions. Palmer, who shows distinct insight into this, might with benefit have discussed Marschner's particular world of characters more, and have gone more fully into another trait, essential to the period and embodied in several of Marschner's operas, the attraction to heroes plucked somewhere between the human and supernatural worlds. There are ancestors in sources as varied as Hoffmann's *Undine* and the Viennese farces of Raimund; much could have been said about Romanticism's attraction to the supernatural, and the evident desire to bend a breach between the real and the irrational, between instinct and reason, that had occurred in the Enlightenment.

If, with this first and long overdue

## Corporate strains

By Michael Kennedy

NICHOLAS KENYON:  
*The BBC Symphony Orchestra*  
The first fifty years, 1930 - 1980  
543pp. BBC Publications. £22.50.  
0 563 17617 2

To write the history of a symphony orchestra is no easy task. It must not become a sequence of biographies of conductors, yet it must explain which conductors succeeded or failed, and why. It must not become a catalogue of programmes, yet if the music performed is not listed and discussed, what point is there in the book? It must explain in readable detail something of both the economics of the

orchestra and the backstage politics; and it must bear in mind that orchestras consist of a group of individual musicians, some of them highly gifted. Nicholas Kenyon's book fulfils all these conditions. He has steered a skilful course between the many pitfalls awaiting historians of a going concern.

A completion for Mr Kenyon was the nature of the BBC itself, a bureaucratic, self-regarding, ingrowing organization, snugly self-sufficient to an almost unimaginable degree yet capable of employing and living with rebellious, infuriating characters. Edward Clark, for instance, was anathema to the BBC establishment, yet he existed within the BBC in a state of creative tension and while on the music staff did as much as any man to lay the

foundation of the orchestra's concern for the music of its time. He earns a noble epitaph from Kenyon: "There was scarcely any internationally significant composer of the 1930s whose work was not promoted in a discerning manner by Clark". But one disgruntled composer, Rutland Boughton, wrote to the BBC, when Clark resigned, to express his pleasure.

Kenyon's account of the genesis of the orchestra is lively and fascinating. Its beginnings were attended by luck as well as by controversy. It might never have happened but for Beecham, who in 1928 wanted to form a new orchestra and, in spite of the abuse and scorn he had poured on broadcast music, proposed an alliance with the BBC which seemed to change in its constituent clauses almost every week. Not surprisingly, the BBC lost patience with him; and perhaps the greatest service Beecham did for the BBC's orchestra was to form the London Philharmonic in 1932, thereby providing a superb rival to stimulate everyone else to play better. No doubt Beecham's regime might have been something special (his performance of Sibelius's Second Symphony with the BBCSO, issued on a record, shows how he made them play), but imagination bogged at the thought of coping with the flow of memoranda from the various BBC departments which had a finger in the pie without ever seeming to have any direct responsibility. So the luck that took Beecham away brought in Adrian Boult, who is the hero of this book, if it can be said to have one. Here was a man who was not jealous of guest conductors, enjoyed conducting in the studio as much as in public, was a fine trainer of musicians and a good administrator, had an extraordinarily catholic taste, stood up for his players (ultimately this was his undoing), and shared John Reith's vision of the BBC Symphony Orchestra's role as that of a National Gallery of music.

But there is no doubt, too, that Boult's willingness to conduct whatever the Music Department put before him encouraged those mandarins to believe that every other conductor would be in a similar mood. Certainly they would very soon have been disabused of that belief by Sir John Barbirolli, who was first choice as successor to Boult (and who, I know, never really had the slightest intention of accepting the offer). Kenyon sets down the full, unpleasant story of the virtual dismissal of Boult by Sir Stewart Waller, who was in the *Deaf* (not *Dream*) of *Timofeev*. The appendices of first performances, personalities, the astonishing contemporary music programmes of 1931-39, and discography are very useful.

study in English of a fascinating composer, one feels some frustration, it is chiefly out of admiration for qualities which Palmer has unnecessarily confined within the constraints of a purely nominal scholarship. His real scholarship, his ability to absorb and properly use his material, seems potentially greater. He has a quick understanding of the music, which he never overstates, and also a sharp eye for Marschner's not very appealing character: probably an inferiority complex lay behind this bad-tempered braggart who used anonymous articles to boost his wares, though none of this seems to have prevented him from attracting four wives. Palmer's slips are few; there is the odd misprint, Spontini did not write an opera called *Olimpiade*, and the Czech musicologist Jaroslav Buzga comes out as Buzka. To call Planck "the great English playwright" is to give the theatrical back who ruled the *Opera* a staggeringly much more than his due. Hardly less questionable is Mr Palmer's view that psychotherapy might have prevented Kleist's suicide. But above all, for its high standards of accuracy and its painstaking examination of operas we should take seriously, this first substantial study in English of Marschner is a welcome event.

## Composer in the round

By Misha Donat

H. C. ROBBINS LONDON:  
*Haydn*  
A Documentary Study  
224pp. 220 illustrations, 44 in colour.  
Thames and Hudson. £18.  
0 500 01252 0

H. C. Robbins London's authoritative five-volume biography of Haydn, the publication of which was completed in 1980, is likely to remain the principal source of information on the composer for years to come. The present study offers what is essentially a digest of some of the most important documents contained in that work (among them the famous contract of 1761 between Haydn and the Esterházy family, the autobiographical sketch of 1776, and a selection of contemporary reviews of the London concerts Haydn gave during the early 1790s), as well as a considerable amount of new pictorial material and a useful appendix in the shape of a chronology of works and related events in Haydn's life. Of particular value is a supplementary section containing examples of autograph scores spanning the composer's entire career, from an early G major keyboard sonata to the funeral march for the unfashionable D minor string quartet of 1803 - his last instrumental work. (It was to this quartet, too, that Haydn was to dedicate his publisher to append his visiting card, which bore a musical setting of the words, "Hail to thee, O Mozart, all and schachschach!" "Gott sei all my strength, old and weak am I.")

A volume of such limited scope clearly could not be expected to contain any detailed discussion of the music itself. Nevertheless, the reader largely unfamiliar with Haydn's work might well gain a somewhat unbalanced view of his output. In the autobiographical sketch to which reference has already been made, Haydn placed considerable emphasis on his operas; Robbins London does the same, to the extent of declaring that the operas of 1766 - 85 are "more interesting than all except a handful of his contemporary instrumental productions". Quite some handful, when one considers that the years in question saw the composition of the first dozen masterpieces in the history of the string quartet (Op 20 and 33), an even greater number of symphonies (including such passionate minor-mode works as the "Travis", No 44, the "Farewell", No 45, and "La Passione", No 49), as well as some of Haydn's finest middle-period piano sonatas and trios.

The beginning of this period, in fact, marks what was perhaps the most violent stylistic upheaval of Haydn's life - one that transformed him more or less overnight from a highly competent composer of little individuality into a creative genius. Yet such an explosive event merits no more than three sentences in the book's introduction; nor is reference made at any stage to the Op 33 quartets of 1781, which were to establish the textural model for string quartet writing for a hundred years to come. (The composer's claim that the quartets were written "in a new and special manner", often dismissed as mere sales-talk, deserves to be taken seriously.) The works of Haydn's late London and Viennese years receive more generous attention; though often surprised to find the great series of Masses - those final manifestations of Haydn's symphonic vocal style - described as "basically... lasting tributes to Haydn's belief in the order of the

universe and the omnipresent and beneficent influence of God's goodness". The plea seems more easily forgiven than the no doubt unintentional belittling of the works' towering musical achievement.

As far as the book's documentary aspect is concerned, only occasionally is attractive speculation allowed to get the better of solid scholarship: the bald statement that as a boy chorister Haydn participated in the Requiem Mass held for Vivaldi, who died in Vienna in 1741, need to be treated with some caution; and the additional remark to the effect that the occasion represented Haydn's first experience of a composer who died poor and forgotten reaches the realms of the metaphysical. For the most part, though, this distillation of Robbins London's many years of invaluable research presents a fascinating picture of the circumstances which gave rise to some of the world's greatest music. What would one not have given to have been present at that quartet party described by Michael Kelly (the Irish tenor who took part in the first performance of *La Nozze di Figaro*) at which Haydn played the first violin. Dittersdorf the second, Mozart the viola, and Vanhal the cello; or the dinner enjoyed in December 1790 by Salomon, Mozart and Haydn, at which the violinist-impressionist arranged for Mozart to come to London on the same terms that he was then offering to Haydn (including, one presumes, the writing of a dozen new symphonies). Had Mozart not died the following year, and had Haydn - as was at one stage his firm intention - brought his young pupil Beethoven with him on his second voyage, in 1794, then London would have played host to all three masters in the final decade of the eighteenth century.

Of other principal conductors, Schwarz fell foul of the London critics; Donat's interesting ambition was to liberate the orchestra from its "slavery to the microphone" and to make the orchestra more independent of the BBC; Colin Davis came unseemly under the shadow of Sir William Glock's partnership with Pierre Boulez. The Glock-Boulez era (a period revolutionized by Kenyon's book) proved that the BBC Symphony Orchestra achieves its peaks when it wholeheartedly espouses the cause of contemporary music. But whereas in Boult's time the standard repertoire was also looked after extremely well, this was not the case from 1971 to 1975.

Kenyon has the gift of making vanished concerts come to life and of quoting critical commentaries which either stir old memories or make one long to have been present. He concentrates so completely on his subject that the reader may be led to forget the existence of the BBC's important regional orchestras, to have brought them into the picture would have made this book impossibly long and even more expensive, but one day somebody should relate their work to the London scene. The illustrations are on the dull side, and once or twice the author's crisp and elegant style becomes slipshod, as if the deadline was pressing at that moment. Also there are some errors: Vaughan-Williams was seventy, not sixty, in 1942, Boughton's opera is *The Lily* (not *Lady Amid* and Loeffler's work is the *Deaf* (not *Dream*) of *Timofeev*. The appendices of first performances, personalities, the astonishing contemporary music programmes of 1931-39, and discography are very useful.

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# Aspiring to the spiritual

By John Russell Brown

CHRISTOPHER INNES:  
Holy Theatre  
Ritual and the Avant Garde  
238pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£14.50.  
0 521 22542 6

Christopher Innes describes some very sober entertainments when he tries to prove that the hallmark of avant-garde drama in this century has been "an aspiration to transcendence, the spiritual in its widest sense". He also commemorates crude, repetitive caricatures, and some elaborate confusions, specifically withdrawn from outraged audiences and revived a few years later, to be greeted with deeply respectful silence, preceded by a lecture or followed by intellectual discussion. He explains why theatre directors have introduced foul smells, weird voices, bodily contortions, severely drilled and geometrically planned movements, free improvisations, unintelligible languages and occasional trances. He considers one play which "took 268 hours to perform, and moved from a small picture-frame stage, open at the rear to show a mountain through the processional face. Actions were performed in slow motion, both to gain a dream quality and to intensify the audience's awareness, to focus their attention - at one point the only movement was that of a live turtle crossing the empty stage, which took almost an hour."

As his title proclaims, Innes calls this activity not Fool's Theatre, Freak Theatre, or even Desperate Theatre, but Holy Theatre. He credits Antonin Artaud with coining the phrase, and finds it echoed by theoreticians and practitioners ever since: for Jean Genet "a performance that does not act upon my soul is in vain"; Jean-Louis Barrault speaks of "sacred theatre" and claims that "To perform is to make love - one gives, one gives oneself in an interchange, an act of holy communion". In the context of this history of avant-garde theatre, it is not surprising to read that Peter Brook's production of *Oriental at Persepolis* made the God-Kroger declare "... *Sharsaya Mulbuda Brangi in Omolon buldora*" or, as those initiated into the new-created language might have understood, "I hear choos roar in the womb of darkness".

Lowering his sights to more common and less demanding theatrical experiences, Innes finds traces of "innovatory end-of-life-giving 'Holy Theatre' almost everywhere; of the National Theatre in London (but here he chastises *Equus* for "intellectual titillation"), at the Royal Court, Sloane Square (although *The Sport of My Mad Mother*, in his opinion, "never rises above unconvincing make-believe") and in Charles Marowitz's Shakespearean adaptations (in which the killing of Duncan is taken to be "the murder of God").

The European, cultural and historical range of this book is very impressive and its most valuable quality. Within its compass, for example, are the *Bacchae*, Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, Balthus, Baudouine, Beckett, Beckett, Béjart, Alban Berg, Roger Blin, Bond, Bowie, Brecht, Brecht, Brecht and Lord Byron - although, surprisingly, neither Blake nor Berlioz. Moreover, the documentation is careful and thorough - a reader can readily pursue his own particular interests - and the author has worked determinedly to consider plays in performance, as well as play-texts and manifestos. Conditions of production, finance, organization, rehearsal and press-relations are all, on good occasion, brought into the new and, for some crucial productions, contradictory reports are quoted about what happened on stage and in the auditorium.

At the book's heart is a long chapter on Artaud. Recent studies in English by Eric Sellen, Ronald Hayman, and Arthur Kroker and the publication of Artaud's complete works in French might seem to have estab-

lished his achievement sufficiently clearly, but Innes brings fresh insights in copiously documented sections on the influence of silent film and nineteenth-century melodrama on Artaud's theatre. He also makes a resolute attempt to describe the performance of all the stage productions in which Artaud took part. (An evocative comment quoted is that Artaud's acting in *The Cent* was "so bad that it ended by interesting us".) Consequently less attention than usual is paid to the adventures and sufferings of his life and less than might be helpful to the philosophical and psychological implications of his theories, but I know of no better way of gaining a detailed impression of Artaud's theatre practice. The chapter concludes with a companion between Artaud's stage productions and those of Oskar Kokoschka, especially his *Murderer of Women's Hope*, which caused a riot when it was first performed, owing to a mixture in the audience of high society, an "intellectual élite" and some soldiers on leave from barracks who responded vigorously to a "symbolic orgasm". Innes argues that Artaud's greatest failing was his inability to work out a "strategy" for theatre-work; in contrast, Kokoschka's play was reprinted five times, revived for considerable runs in major cities, and was subsequently made still more famous by Reinhardt's two productions, set to music by Hindemith, and performed as an opera in 1921 and 1922.

The chapter concludes with a measured judgment:

Artaud, then, was very much a man of his time, a seminal figure for modern drama, but not in fact an innovator... His theories (misunderstood or taken all too literally as in, say, the Living Theatre's *Paradise Now*) have produced only unrealisable strategies or self-indulgent, undramatic psychotherapy. However, the concepts that he picked up from the cultural currents of his time are among the most creative impulses of modern theatre.

The rest of *Holy Theatre* is a justification for this claim and a commentary on later effects of Artaud's "perception that the stage has a reality quite distinct from life". Sometimes at great speed and sometimes with lingering admiration, the reader is shown an amazing quantity of short-lived, small-scale, long-surviving, commercially successful or disastrously incompetent theatrical activity. Its origins are traced to Strindberg, German Expressionism, Jarry, magic, dance, music, painting and medicine.

Reading this book, has made me resolve never to use the word "Holy" about theatre, and to hope that I never have to use it. For Innes, the word draws attention to

new theatrical enterprises and, more to his serious purpose, to a renewed enactment of religious myth and primitive rituals - the last word of his last chapter is "Aeschylus". But there is plenty of evidence throughout his book that the encouragement of "Holy Theatre" has led to an art that is self-concerned, self-consuming, inbred and often very expensive; some of it seems useless in almost every way, some wilfully dangerous, and some absurd and stupid. Perhaps the time has come to see "Holy Theatre" as a banner that was waved rather desperately while theatre fought for its life against mounting costs and the rival entertainments of radio, film, television and video-recordings and to consider that those very circumstances could suggest stronger slogans and more necessary and enjoyable aims. Theatre will always be an individual, crafted product, hand-made and one-off, but "holiness" need not be the hallmark by which it is valued.

Innes argues that the theatre's holiness is part of a wider interest in primitive myths and rituals, but there is evidence in his book (and in the practice of "Holy Theatre") that a deeper source is the pains and pleasures of group performances before audiences. The sense of giving, sympathizing, of control and peace to which many actors in many different theatres will testify does attract the

word "Holy"; and it is an easy step to say that sharing this state of being could create a revolutionary change or that the greater the distance between theatre and life the more successfully shocking it could be. Such, this he so, the "Holy Theatre" of the avant-garde has based its justification and planned its development on its own sense of self-gratification.

Few artists, or anyone else, would speak of the forms of contemporary culture in the terms of Innes's book. Is there much usefulness or will in concepts of Holy Painting, Holy Fiction, Holy Music, Holy Poetry, Holy Religion, Holy Dietetics or Holy Education? If actors, directors or dramatists feel themselves transformed, elevated or humbled while fulfilling their tasks in the theatre, that experience need not be the product of their work or the premise for good work in years to come. In the same way, a desire to present the *Oresteia*, or to perform in arduous, surreal or seemingly impossible styles, cannot have an automatic or unassailable justification in any claim to Holiness. If new work in theatre needs a slogan, and if the best work of the past eighty years needs a criterion on which to base judgments, I would submit several different epithets for consideration: entertaining, rational (or, perhaps, skilful), public, revelatory, necessary.

These are somewhat moralistic reflections to be aroused by a book whose sole intention is to amuse. *Curtain Calls* contains a vast amount of fascinating information that on give nothing but delight. It tells you which theatres used to allow chimney sweeps to attend performances in their working clothes; how Mrs. Hamlet's children stayed awake to hear the result of their mother's only first night; what Bernard Miles's son said when his parents had a slight disagreement; how at least one *Hamlet* proved when, owing to sudden illness, it had to be played without the Prince; how a *Hamlet* who did appear played the beg-pipes during the interval; and a thousand other things. It is chiefly compiled from researches in second-hand bookshops made by Bernard Miles when he was only a travelling player. In *Curtain Calls*, with J. C. Trewin's assistance, he has written a book which gives pleasure on every page.

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## Auto-analysis

By Philip Thody

EUGÈNE IONESCO:  
*Voyages chez les morts*  
Thèmes de Variations  
134pp. Paris: Gallimard.

In *Voyages chez les morts* on themes at variations we again see a Ionesco who keeps the promise of his title by exploiting his obsessions. For the play is a dream - or, more accurately, a nightmare - in which a man, known simply as Jean (like the hero of *La Soif* or *Le Jardin*) - travels among the dead.

Neither the terrors which he undergoes nor the occasional flashes of political satire are likely to surprise anyone familiar with the atmosphere of Ionesco's later work. For when Jean's father describes how he found it quite natural to change from being a defence lawyer to writing novels for the police when the new regime asked him to do so, the anti-totalitarian Ionesco is as visible as it is in the *Journal en miroir*.

genuine conviction, for when he had seen Garrick's Sir John Brute he frankly admitted that he himself could not have touched him in that part. He would never have believed that a Hamlet so defective could have been so magnificent in Brute. Garrick, instead of being amused by this extraordinary star from the provinces, was exceedingly mortified.

It may be said that few men can stand criticism. This is true enough. Yet in connection with this anecdote about Garrick, it is worth remembering the story of Jules Lemaitre and Georges Ohnet, which, being French, naturally enough does not appear in *Curtain Calls*. Ohnet, a dramatist and novelist, had little talent, but his success was even greater than Garrick's. Lemaitre despised him, and once began an article with the words, "It is my custom to write about literature. My readers will excuse me if today I write about M. Georges Ohnet." Ohnet at that time had a contract worth several thousand pounds to write a serial for *Le Figaro*. Fearing that Lemaitre's article might involve the newspaper in serious financial loss if the serial were proceeded with, he immediately

wrote to the editor requesting him from all obligation. When sleep afterwards he met Lemaitre, he greeted him with the utmost friendliness.

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*ou Présent passé, Passé-présent*. Nor do the cultural references or philosophical jokes require much elucidation, welcome though they are in a text which reads dangerously like self-parody. It may be ingenious to show Jean's disappointment at finding himself still surrounded by "approximations" even when the archetypal choir is there to be seen and touched in the world of essences; but Ionesco's anti-Platonism is a little too obvious. So, too, are the Dante references on pages 65 and 101, though it is reassuring to learn, on reading of the possibility that we may be "essentiellement" *tâté*, *métaphysiquement* *tâté*, *une fois pour toutes*, *une fois pour toutes* les *existences*, les *quasi-existences* that the Newmen who wrote about the "terrible, aboriginal catastrophe" lying at the root of the human adventure is now well and truly installed across the Channel as well.

*Voyages chez les morts* has not yet been performed on stage. This is not perhaps surprising, since it is hard to see how the printed version could be made into a viable play. It is too long, too episodic and too self-indulgent. A recent reviewer in the

word "Holy"; and it is an easy step to say that sharing this state of being could create a revolutionary change or that the greater the distance between theatre and life the more successfully shocking it could be. Such, this he so, the "Holy Theatre" of the avant-garde has based its justification and planned its development on its own sense of self-gratification.

Few artists, or anyone else, would speak of the forms of contemporary culture in the terms of Innes's book. Is there much usefulness or will in concepts of Holy Painting, Holy Fiction, Holy Music, Holy Poetry, Holy Religion, Holy Dietetics or Holy Education? If actors, directors or dramatists feel themselves transformed, elevated or humbled while fulfilling their tasks in the theatre, that experience need not be the product of their work or the premise for good work in years to come. In the same way, a desire to present the *Oresteia*, or to perform in arduous, surreal or seemingly impossible styles, cannot have an automatic or unassailable justification in any claim to Holiness. If new work in theatre needs a slogan, and if the best work of the past eighty years needs a criterion on which to base judgments, I would submit several different epithets for consideration: entertaining, rational (or, perhaps, skilful), public, revelatory, necessary.

These are somewhat moralistic reflections to be aroused by a book whose sole intention is to amuse. *Curtain Calls* contains a vast amount of fascinating information that on give nothing but delight. It tells you which theatres used to allow chimney sweeps to attend performances in their working clothes; how Mrs. Hamlet's children stayed awake to hear the result of their mother's only first night; what Bernard Miles's son said when his parents had a slight disagreement; how at least one *Hamlet* proved when, owing to sudden illness, it had to be played without the Prince; how a *Hamlet* who did appear played the beg-pipes during the interval; and a thousand other things. It is chiefly compiled from researches in second-hand bookshops made by Bernard Miles when he was only a travelling player. In *Curtain Calls*, with J. C. Trewin's assistance, he has written a book which gives pleasure on every page.

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*Nouvelle Revue Française* wondered whether it might not be addressed "aux psychanalyses plutôt qu'aux metteurs en scène", and a play in which the Quest for the Mother leads the anxious son into the presence of a ferociously finger-nailed harp is indeed so open to Freudian explanations as to be positively embarrassing. The Götter der Welt issue of the *NR* contains, at Ionesco's, a terrifying account of the happenings of his first visit to a brothel at the age of sixteen. Coming as it does after some very pertinent rather right-wing commentaries on the Tosteville riots and the Royal Wedding, this extraordinarily honest piece of self-analysis raises the question of whether he is not now ready to move away from the theatre and towards a relatively new status as social commentator and auto-analyst of the Rousseau kind. The one autobiographical offering by *Voyages chez les morts* suggests that this is what now really interests Ionesco, and it may well be that the theatre is no longer as suitable a medium as it was for the language-games and surreal imaginings by which he has added so original a note to French literature.

## An Actor's Life for Me

By Hugo Williams

My father stands at an angle to the Church of Saint Ethelburga in the City, the divorcees' church. My mother hangs back, shielding her eyes from the flashes. She twists her new ring while my father explains to reporters how something unwinds in mid-air - a marriage perhaps, or could it be a googy? His knuckles show white on the officer's swagger stick which he's holding like a kite reel. Why clench thy fists, O Hulle and? Thy mother's near and sure there's none would wish to fight thee. The reporters laugh uneasily, remembering to mention the children of a previous marriage, their ages and places of birth. They've asked him to smile and he's twisted his mouthache for them. His second, civilian Best Man tries to pull him away to the reception.

"You should have been there then" they tell you casually, the girls who were there themselves. "Before the war your father was the kind of man to take you - on the spur of a telegram - to one of those Continental casinos where they keep the curtains drawn all summer: white ties and Sidney Bechet, gardenias on a breakfast tray. You'd follow the road-map south in someone's aeroplane, putting down in a field while it was light. Oh, those were the days all right and the nights too for someone like your father..."

Then you mourn the fact once more that you missed knowing him then, that you hardly recognize this man who somehow jumped the gun and started ahead of you. It isn't fair, but there's nothing to be done. The casinos are dead and all the money's gone. Though you follow the road-map south on the spur of a lifetime you'll never catch up with the fun and he won't be back for you. You're strung out like runners across the world, losing ground, in a race that began when you were born.

My father let the leather window-strap slip through his fingers and I smell the sea. He was showing me gun emplacements to stop me feeling train-sick on our first holiday after the war. I clutched my new bucket in two lifeless hands, excited by the blackness which had exploded, killing everyone. We went over a ridge to a gun and he lit two cigarettes and threw them down to some workmen rolling up behind wire. He said there was something flat for me in the guard's van, if I could hang on. I sat there, staring at one of the holes in the window-strap, imagining death as a sort of surprise for men in uniform. "I think I can - I think I can - I think I can" the train was supposed to be saying as we came to Dungeness Lighthouse in the dark, but I didn't think I could. When we started going backwards, I was glad.

Now that I hear trains whistling out of Paddington on their way to Wales, I like to think of him, as young as he was then, running behind me along the sand, holding my saddle steady and launching me off on my own.

Now that I look unlike the boy on the brand new bike who wobbled away down the beach, I hear him telling me "Keep pedalling, keep pedalling". When I looked over my shoulder he was nowhere to be seen.

He wanted me to be like him, liking clothes, but not too much. I did, but much too anxiously. I looked in the mirror constantly for years, trying and re-trying his ties. They had to have grooves and a sturdy, rectangular knot, never a Windsor one. Clothes were a kind of wit, I thought. You either carried them off, or you looked ridiculous. "Make a girl laugh," said my father, stating the obvious. I wanted to, of course, but whatever I put on made me look even younger than my brother, who was ten.

I tried every combination of crevas and cardigan in my efforts to look natural, *dégage*. I'd thrust a casual hand into the pocket of my flannels and feel the little rolls of pocket dust in there and say nothing again.

My father's forty-seven suits, awaiting his pleasure in a separate dressing-room, were proof of his superior wit. Who else had a white barthes dinner jacket he never even wore? At fourteen, I was nagging my grandmother to make me shirts with fuller sleeves. My jeans I wanted taken in and pressed. I was very keen on suede. "You should be with someone a full minute before you realize they're well-dressed," said my father, laying down the law. I imagined it dawning on people in sixty seconds flat that I was his equal at last. "Suppose you realize before that?" I asked, wriggling my toes in my chisel-toed chukka boots. (I wanted to look like him, but not too much.) "Probably queer," said my father.

I had read in 1958, I caught a glimpse of money working and I shut my eyes. I was a love-sick creamer-candidate, reading poetry under the desk in History, wondering how to go about my life. "Write a novel!" said my father. "Put everything in! Sell the film rights for a fortune! Sit up straight!" I sat there, filleting a chestnut leaf in my lap, not listening. I wanted to do nothing, urgently.

At his desk, in his dressing-gown, among compliant womenfolk, he seemed too masterful, too horrified by me. He banged the table if I dipped my chair. He couldn't stand my hair. One day, struggling with a chestnut leaf, I fell over backwards or the chair-leg broke. I didn't care any more if poetry was easier than prose. I lay there in the ruins of a perfectly good chair and shut my eyes. I knew what I wanted to do.

At his desk, in his dressing-room, among three photographs of my father in costume, I wonder how to go about his life. Put everything in! The bankruptcy? The hell! The little cork-and-leather theatrical "lifts" he used to wear? The blocking for his hair? Or again: leave everything out! Do nothing, tip my chair back and stare at him for once, my lip trembling at forty? My father banged the table: "Sit up straight!"

The recording starts too late to drown the sound of wheels. A little screen jerks upwards and the coffin wobbles towards us on rollers, like a diving hoard. This is my father's curtain call. His white-ringed eyes flicker to the gallery as he bows to us. How does his leading lady, then step back again, rejoicing hands with the cast.

In the dressing-room afterwards, he pours us all champagne: "It's like a madhouse here. We're staffed by chumps. The stage-manager thinks the entire production stems from his control-paul, like a cremation. He's never heard of laughs. As for the set, Tom says it's the old Jermyn Street Turkish Baths painted shit. Lot's hope it doesn't run."

Now that I'm the same age as he was during the war, now that I hold him up like a mirror to look over my shoulder, I'm given to wondering what manner of man it was who walked in on us that day in his final uniform. A soldier with two families? An actor without a career? "You didn't know who on earth I was," he told me. "You justified and cried."

Now that he has walked out again leaving me no wiser, now that I'm sitting here like an actor waiting to go on, I wish I could see again that rude, forgiving man from World War II and hear him goading me. Drowning in peace-time, nothing to fight in my lifetime, left alone to write poetry on the tiles and be happy. I'm given to wondering what manner of man I might be.







# The suffering objects of desire

By Tim Dooley

D. M. THOMAS:  
Dreaming in Bronze  
71pp. Secker and Warburg. £4.50.  
0 436 51891 0

In a review of D.M. Thomas's last volume of poems, *The Honeycomb Voyage*, John Cotton came to the present conclusion that what gave unity to the rather disparate thematic and stylistic concerns of Thomas's work was a consummate narrative gift. Since the publication of *The Honeycomb Voyage* in 1978, Thomas has received considerable attention as the author of three highly original novels: *The Flute Player*, *Birchstone*, and *The White Hotel*. His new collection of poetry, *Dreaming in Bronze*, is likely, therefore, to be read in the light of his fiction rather than his earlier collections of poems, all of which are now out of print.

Thomas's earlier collections — a group of science fiction poems in *Penguin Modern Poets 11*, then *Two Voices*, *Logan Stone*, *The Shaft*, *Love and Other Deaths* — were competent but unexciting examples of experimental writing. It is probably his translations of Anna Akhmatova that have given his work the greater seriousness and formal control noticeable from *The Honeycomb Voyage* onwards. *The Flute Player* paid specific tribute to Akhmatova and her remarkable generation, examining the ways in which she creatively survived the cruelties of a totalitarian regime. An account of the massacre at Babi Yar is central to *The White Hotel*, and in *Dreaming in Bronze* Thomas again presents us with examples of poems suffering on a mass scale, concentrating on individual victims like the gypsies murdered at Auschwitz and Treblinka ("Translation of a Lost Gypsy Song") or a young Japanese girl dying slowly from the effects of nuclear fallout ("Sadako Sasaki").

"Sun Valley", a poem whose ostensible subject is mechanized poultry farming, allows Thomas to suggest that our inability to frame an appropriate response to Hiroshima or the German and Soviet death camps might represent a horror as great as the events themselves:

How weak are words, and how unfit to frame  
my concept — which lags after what was shown  
so far, it flatters it to call it lame!  
And it might be ten thousand fowl or one  
went smoothly past the imperceptible  
electric impulse where they had begun  
their afterlife, wings fluttering the while;  
and even after they had been thrust  
through  
the cutter, headless they were fluttering  
still.  
But swiftly after their power to move  
composition vanished — as when, journeying  
down through Inferno, one's own power  
vanishes like the sun and the other stars.

Thomas's careful mimicry of Dante's tone and form makes the capitalized "Inferno" nearly superfluous. It also emphasizes how far he has moved from the rather arbitrary use of form that marked his earlier work. One implication of this poem — that the availability of temporal visions of Hell makes the theology underpinning Dante's own vision redundant — is underlined by his version of a poem by the medieval Armenian writer, Prik. In "Protect", a "Just and truthful God" is assigned for his crimes against mankind, and is asked:

Do you envy us our courage, patient  
endurance,  
passion for the unattainable:  
qualities you cannot possess?

Calm endurance, the imagination's victory over experience, is for Thomas an important element in coming to terms with the idea of suffering. Elena, in *The Flute Player*, comes to see the values for which she is prepared to endure suffering so calmly, not "as a faith and pious book," but "as a private delight rather than, mortally, a help which helps her survive, and

Thomas suggests that it is through private preferences, however quirky and obstinate they may seem, that we are able to recognize that individuality in others which inspires imaginative sympathy and love.

It is to be expected that, as an admirer of Freud, Thomas should see a conflict between *Eros* and *Thanatos*, between the pleasure principle and the death wish, as lying at the heart of the problem. The obsessive exploration of sexual themes in Thomas's writing connects with his moral concerns. In expressing a sexual preference or asserting "our individuality our ability to smile in our own life". Paradoxically, however, the sexual instinct's independence of rational and conscious control reminds us of the limitations on our freedom and dignity. The case of Peter Kurten, the sexually-motivated murderer guillotined in Düsseldorf in 1931, and that of Freud's patient the Wolf-Man, are recalled both in *The White Hotel* and in *Dreaming in Bronze*. The depersonalizing aspect of sexual compulsion that one sees in these examples has striking affinities with the dehumanization associated with institutionalized cruelty. A similar depersonalization occurs in sexual fetishism, where partial objects (such as the nlp-porative suspender-belts and stockings in Thomas's writing) take the place of human relationships as the end of desire. Thomas, who

elsewhere is so humane a writer, seems to me morally obtuse in the way in which, as part of his treatment of sexual drives, he assumes that an understanding relationship with another person must be of less importance than the fulfilment of private fantasies.

*Dreaming in Bronze* opens with two poems whose literary-historical settings suggest that respect for a sexual partner as a person is a hindrance to the pleasures of love. In "The Stone Clasp", Don Juan rejects the love of the virtuous and forgiving Donna Anna, sensing that to act out of the respect he feels towards her would be to deny his carnal, amoral nature. In "Farewell, My Life; I Love You", Pushkin's love for his wife Natalia is dependent on her willingness "to be lost in love tonight and sacrificed".

Beneath the absolute beauty of your surfaces  
there is nothing, nothing, Natalia. That is why  
I love you. To love you is to learn to skate.

In "Two Women, Made by the Selfsame Hand", one of the most accomplished and resonant poems in this collection, Thomas examines the way in which archetypal images of women affect individual relationships. The speaker and his partner are haunted during a rainy holiday by two terracotta statuettes which exemplify

the opposing images of ecstatic and abundant femininity said to be typical of ancient "matriarchal" civilizations:

a girl with briny locks and changeling gaze,  
the left hand open on her thigh,  
late-adolescent undine perching on  
a rock — and her soulful primitive  
madonna, tall and standing, gazing down  
with all the fear that perfect love can give.

The speaker purchases the first of these figures, but his partner rejects both as incomplete: "the nurturing madonna without sex, / the lonely mistress without motherhood . . . to the puzzlement of the man in the poem who interprets her anger as sexual rejection."

The rejection in Thomas's poems, however, is more typically the other way around. The female speaker in "The Lady of Fetters", who demands to be seen as a person rather than a symbol of sexual power, is insulted and galled. In "Ani", a reworking of a Rumanian myth, the parts of a woman's body which will fit neither the abundant nor the ecstatic stereotype are explicitly rejected as worthless. Elsewhere, the sexual organs and the sexual act itself become symbols of revulsion: female public hair is reminiscent of a tarantula and a banana spider; the vagina is referred to as a "gash". In the sequence "Big Deaths, Little Deaths", sex becomes an expression of bewildered anger, a

room Dancers", is a genuine "making it new" of his subject.

This last poem sees the dancers as expressing not the "whole flame" of love towards each other but affording "partial glimpses" of it. It is love, hedged round with discretion, or failure, or introspection, or the boundary of the "cold rink", that occupies the poet throughout. Mole is now just beyond the *mezzo del cammin* — he was born in 1941 — and the collection seems to have grown primarily out of a fascination with transience, with the sequence of human generations and with man's emotional vulnerability in the face of this. Several poems ponder his relationship with his father on the one hand and with his children on the other: love is affirmed, but there is a sense of wide perspectives opening up from this novel position of centrality, perspectives that have led the poet to reconsider its meaning. There is no strain in these poems, no need to strive after affect; language has been naturally keenly conscious of its own experience, none of which is taken for granted, and this type of integrity also results in the achievement of some successful light verse.

Tener Baybars also possesses a keen consciousness of his own experience, but this experience is much narrower, and is subjected to a much less careful scrutiny. At first sight the theme of *Pregnant Shadows* looks promising: a disappointing and painful love-affair (or affairs) mingled with an involvement in what the back cover describes as "Christian mysticism". But one feels that the emotions have had too little time to mature; in the main sequence "21 Days of Christmas" Baybars achieves the occasional artistic coherence but his language is for the most part a series of spurs and gushes reminiscent of not especially distinguished journal entries. Some readers will no doubt find the immediacy this provides compelling, but for those who like a little more artistic transmutation *Pregnant Shadows* is unlikely to afford much interest. And "Christian mysticism" seems too elevated a title for the book's fervent but confused religious ingredients: Baybars more or less sums things up when he notes in a prayer: "I want to breathe in your Glory / and exhale myself in your Glory / but am too much drunk with her, unable to sort out expletives from deeply felt prayers."

Cal Clothier's *Death Mask* contains eleven poems, about half of which are subdivided into several sections, and whether he writes about Crete, South America, or the death of an old woman in provincial England, Clothier never fails to

achieve an accomplished level of craftsmanship. Yet one feels that his carefully-chosen themes are too documented with much linguistic refinement, the poet's emotional involvement remains questionable. I confess to not enjoying "great moments of history" poems like "Darwin on the Andes" and "Nietzsche in San Marco, Venice". Clothier is better in poems such as "El Dorado", where he presents the life-donating sacrifice of an Indian mask. As this poem, the title, and the twin epigraphs from Marjorie, *Death Mask* has a set, obvious stare about it.

Les Aylon's *Red Alert: The Last Warning* is a brief play in voices set in a space station on a way to the new city of Alphaville. The shuttle is hijacked by the god Dionysus, who gives the passengers — long since reduced to zombies by the mechanized gratifications of American consumerism — one final chance to experience life properly before he erases the shuttle. Also the injunctions to "Fuck/Wine/Dance" are carried out, the passengers are ravished. *Red Alert* is a zany, joyous and mildly interesting piece of convention-bashing. Dionysus doesn't convince us that the Dionysiac orgy is the best means of getting mankind to unite in hymning the fables to Beethoven's Ninth.

Finally, Roger McGough's *Unlucky for Some* is a set of thirteen poems each with thirteen lines, spoken by a succession of society cast-offs: tramps, drunk, petty thieves, the old, sad infirm, a victim of weakly protesting voices, their resignation and hopelessness in suitably unpretentious language.

Forthcoming events at the National Poetry Centre, 21 Ears Court, Square, London SW5, will include a reading by Ronald England from his book *Nightmare Fever* — *Robinson Poets in Revolution* (Thursday, January 28); and poetry readings by John Wain and Anthony Conran (February 4), Ted Walker and John Ormond (February 11); Michael Wadsworth and Wendy Cope (February 16); and Wes Magee and John Bury (February 23).

*New Departures* No 14 (February 15, 1982) contains work by: among others, David Gascoyne, "Home to Denis Roche's Michael Deguy, Michael Holob, Michael Smith, Peter Hughes, Michael Smith, James Berry, Adrian Mitchell, Tom Rickard, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Andrei Voznesensky, Allen Ginsberg and Samuel Beckett. The issue also contains illustrations by Barry Fantoni, David Hockney and R. B. Kilja.

## Second eleven

By John Lucas

MICHAEL MEYER (Editor):  
Summer Days  
Writers on Cricket  
255pp. Eyre Methuen. £7.95.  
0 413 49660 2

*Summer Days* is no doubt intended as reading matter for winter nights, but I doubt whether it will long hold men, old or young, from the chimney corner. Far too many of the contributors appear to have little to say, but they say it at considerable length. Most of them claim to follow cricket although they claim any competence at playing it, but some admit that they neither understand nor like the game, and find it impossible to imagine how anyone could give their days and/or nights to it.

As it happens, this approach works perfectly for Beryl Bainbridge, who manages conclusively to demonstrate that she knows nothing about cricket, and at the same time writes a very funny parable about some more or less improbable members of her family for whom cricket was both a religion and a cause of feuds, and who helped her to understand that you can get blood from a stone. Her contribution is well worth reading, and so is Arthur Marshall's reminiscence of those far-off school

afternoons during which he volunteered for Long Stop (this capitalist) on the grounds that "it allowed you to pass the time of day with friends enjoying nought nearby".

Yet even Marshall's piece, neatly titled "The Crooked Bat", pays homage to that misty nostalgia which creeps through the pages of *Summer Days*. It is announced by the silly, postmillist-style cover photograph, featuring fat men in grey flannels playing cricket on a village green in front of thatched cottages while shadows lengthen over the lush grass. This is not to say that writers about cricket should avoid all mention of the past. Indeed, to a large extent cricket is its past, since whatever happens in the present game is fully understandable only by reference to the players, games and laws of earlier years. But a proper understanding of such matters isn't at all the same thing as the damp prosings of those who assume that dross can be turned to gold by the mere mention of boyhood adulations or the remembered glory of a winning run or wicket. Nor has it to do with the coy confessions of the incompetent cricket addict. Cricket is additive, but that should go without saying. Unfortunately, the majority of the contributors to *Summer Days* don't at all mind saying the obvious. And they seem positively to relish the chance of producing leadenly facetious accounts of their infatuations with cricket and of their attempts to play it.

An essay of the kind that Melvyn Bragg appears to think appropriate is one essay too many. To find at least half a dozen of them inside the pages of this book is a guarantee of boredom. (P. J. Kavanagh, Julian Symons and Ronald Harwood are among the worst offenders.)

If there is one belief about cricket that seems to emerge from these pages it is that the game is somehow the preserve of the public schools and/or private gentlemen's clubs. None of the contributors mentions league cricket nor Saturday and Sunday afternoon club cricket, although that is what the majority of cricketers play, and it is by and large from there that the really talented ones emerge. *Summer Days* therefore gives the impression of being not only a dull compilation, but a lazy one.

Even so, there are some good moments. Although Gavin Ewart's clever tripe-monosyllabic rhyme exercise on Boycott fails, I think, because it simply isn't true ("He just stands and picks, flocks . . . SIX/No one could call this bat-and-pad lad" — Oh, yes they could, and anyway how many saxes has Ewart seen Boycott hit, let alone *Heck*?), the McGonagall-style "Not Quite Cricket" is witty and accurate and a cut above any other poem in the volume.

But there are plenty of good, uncollected poems about cricket that

Michael Meyer might well have considered: Edmund Blunden's elegy on Hammond, for example. Harold Pinter makes Arthur Wellard sound like a character from one of his own plays, but then professional cricketers, like professional jazzmen, often cultivate a manner of speech that is sardonic and litote. (On reflection, it is perhaps surprising that Pinter hasn't so far set a play in a cricket pavilion.)

Pinter's piece is excellent, and Roy Fuller's "From Sparrow Park in Stanley Park" has a fine description of McDonald's bowling action which is a model of careful and loving accuracy, and exactly what cricketers grope ought to be but hardly ever is. Perhaps one cannot often hope for such accuracy, for a daily newspaper needs its copy and most copy is bound to make for dull reading. Fuller recognizes this when he remarks, "To experience the irrelevances, accidents, banalities and tediousness of actuality through the subjective vision, and then to see the rich and contradictory process in the newspaper subsumed in the bare, brief lists of scores (eg. 'O'Connor b.w. 42') made one speculate on the nature of experience."

Agreed. But writers, true writers, ought surely to be able to recapture the actuality? It is because so few of the contributors to *Summer Days* are capable of this, or seem even to understand the need for it, that the book is overall such a dismal failure.

By Gavin Ewart

LESLIE CUNLIFFE, CRAIG BROWN  
AND JON CONNELL (Editors):  
The Dirty Bits  
143pp. André Deutsch. £4.95.  
0 233 97395 8

"She touched his organ, and from that bright epoch, even if the old companion of his happiest hours, in capable as he had thought of elevation began a new and defiled existence." When I read these words in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, as a Cambridge undergraduate in 1936, I could scarcely contain my delight and surprise. Later, in the 1950s, a colleague in an advertising agency presented me with a privately printed (or was it Hart-Davis?) collection of such pieces by Edward Galthorne-Hardy, which she rightly considered a suitable birthday present.

This is a far larger and wider-ranging compendium. The passages selected fall, roughly, into five categories: 1, the general bawdy (eg. Shakespeare, " . . . have we some strange Indian with the great toni come to court, the women so beseege us? Bless me, what a fry of fornication is at door!"); 2, the natural history (Aristotle, Lucretius, and Melville's fine description of a whale's penis in *Moby Dick* — what an appropriate title, one might frivolously say!); 3, the unintentional (as in Dickens above, depending largely on the changing meaning of words); 4, the very unintentional ("We played at Vingt-un, which as Fulwar was unsuccessful, gave him an opportunity of exposing himself as usual"; June Austen in letter to Cassandra); 5, the passage of concealed psychological significance (Henry James excelled at these, though Conrad is also quoted), where what is described is sexually symbolic. Religious mystics also hold up a two-way mirror of this kind.

The purest form, of course, is the completely unintentional (as against Rabalais and the Exeter Jokes, which are consciously obscene). There is a childish element in our pleasure when the serious and respected writer is, as we were, caught out. *The Public School Hyman Book* for instance: "Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice. The midnight cry. 'Behold, I come!'". Also the Bible (here mainly *The Song of Solomon* and *Leviticus*).

The Psychologicals are the next best. Quilp's desire for Little Nell's "little room" in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, it's impossible, I think, knowing Dickens's predilections, that he didn't have some kind of vague awareness of what his pen was up to. Sterne, on the other hand, very well knew and exploited the double sense in which his reader was invited to take him: he is a teaser and an equivocator and what he hints at never happens.

The book is divided into seventeen sections (*Dreaming*, *Spirits*, *Holding Your Own*, *Family Ties*, *Animal Magic*, etc.) and in fact it does exactly what Byron in *Don Juan* says the editors of the classics did in his day, but for the opposite reason — it puts all the "grosser parts" of great and anti-great writers together, not to save us from temptation, but to offer it. Peeps, Aubrey (but one story of a young scholar engaged with a diverging when with his tutor — "Two menupration!" is missing), the two Burtons (of Melancholy and Arabia), Hans Carvel in Rabalais's and Prior's versions, it relies on all these; but not on such works as *Fanny Hill* and *L'Histoire d'O*, which are avowed pornography.

One marvellous example of the unintentional is also absent without leave (present in Galthorne-Hardy), the bit from George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (I seem to remember) about a lady who secretly kept her Brown curls in her drawers. Nor is Tennyson's masterpiece to be found, once famous in girl's schools: "The curse is come upon me," cried *The Lady of Shalott*.

## In Jane Austen country

By Victoria Glendinning

GORDON MINGAY:  
Mrs. Harriet Dandling  
And Other Scenes from Regency  
Life 1812-1823  
Watercolours by Diana Sperling  
73pp. Gollancz. £8.50.  
0 575 03035 6

On the evening of September 17, 1816, the Mrs Harriet of the title was dancing blithely, without a partner, to the linking of a harpsichord; the moment was captured in watercolours by twenty-four-year-old Diane Sperling. The contents of two of Miss Sperling's sketchbooks are reproduced, in the same size as the originals and with holograph captions. In this volume, Elizabeth Longford provides a short foreword, and Gordon Mingay an introduction and notes to the seventy pictures, which were painted between 1812 and 1823.

The Sperlings were middling gentry, living on 500 acres at Dymoke Hall near Halesden in Essex. They were not very grand: this is Jane Austen country. Diana depicts her "Pappy and Mum", as she calls them, playing an unending game of chess; and herself, taking an active part in cleaning, gardening, burning waste, nests and even hanging wallpaper. Their recreations are bowls, fishing, dancing, swimming and riding. Mud and water are perpetual hazards: aIsabella is always falling off her donkey into the dirt, and when Pappy and the girls pick their way in single file over the fields to have dinner with a neighbour, each carries a little bag with indoor shoes in it. (Pappy sticks his pumps into his back pocket.)

Diana's captions are: humorous and self-explanatory. "Mrs Sperling murdering flies — assisted by her maid who received the dead and wounded." Gordon Mingay, required to provide a parallel commentary, is driven to the pits of platitude: "Houses of the period, were frequently plagued by mice, rats, bugs and flies . . . He found even less inspiration in a picture, simply called 'Breaking in the Donkeys': 'The donkey is said to have been introduced into England in Elizabethan times; it had been widely used in the ancient world. . . . This is desperate stuff."

of improvisation about all the Sperlings' arrangements.

The girls wear white muslin dresses, puff-sleeved and high-waisted; except in hot weather, over their dresses they wear pelisses — sort of pinafore dresses, usually of a bright colour. Since they were sleeveless, the pelisses cannot have added much warmth. There are shawls — but how much happier women in country houses must have been once Lord Cardigan had invented the cardigan. The Duke of Wellington has already popularized the wellington, abbreviated versions of which are worn by the girls in the garden. For outdoors they also have red cloaks, and scute-shaped bonnets. Women of a certain age of course never go bareheaded, even in the house.

The girls and women are drawn

## Stately soufflés

By Lindsay Duguid

ELIZABETH BOND RYAN  
AND WILLIAM J. EAKINS:  
The Lord Peter Wimsey Cookbook  
138pp. New Haven: Ticknor and Fields. \$10.95.  
0 89919 032 4

Snobbery about food and wine and an interest in the aristocracy are happily mixed in *The Lord Peter Wimsey Cookbook*. It makes no pretence to be a collection of useful recipes but is a compilation of the various distinguished and undistinguished meals consumed by the title character, detective in the course of his adventures by Dorothy L. Sayers. The occasion of each meal is described (the shepherd's pie eaten at the Fenchurch St Paul vicarage on New Year's Day after a night's bell-ringing in *The Nine Tailors*, the porridge served by Bunter to Inspector Parker in *Whose Body?*), and the text is further enlivened with some of Lord Peter's snappier pronouncements on food and wine.

The research for the book has clearly been thorough and the American authors solemnly tell the reader how to re-create some implausible, sounding menus (Consumme polonais, Fillet of sole, Salmis of Game, Gorgonzola and Biscuits), filling in what Miss Sayers omitted to mention by recourse to other Lord Peter stuff.

books and their own imagination. The transatlantic origin of the book adds to the interest when it comes to glossing broad sauce, blotters and cucumber sandwiches and to explaining "making a cup of tea in the British manner". You cannot but admire the devotion of the authors who treat the food with the reverence which surely did not get at the dust table. The food itself was clearly very different from today's on the evidence of this book. Quite apart from the quantity — breakfast, tea (both afternoon and high), five-course lunches, pudding followed by savoury, dinner followed by supper — not much of what Lord Peter ate seems palatable. Miss Sayers is somehow not convincing in her descriptions of upper-class food of the period (the authors suggest that the author may have helped from her husband, "Miss" Fleming, author of *The Gourmet's Book of Food and Drink*, whose recipe for a bangover cure is included here). Dishes such as kippers, Welsh "rarebit" and mashed turnips ring true but one is less sure about pâté de foie gras from Portsmouth, thinned turtle soup and garishes of radishes cut into rosebuds.

The notes on wine are more interesting: the wine that is drunk with the meals is always mentioned and the vintage rarely creep past 1910. In common with other detective novelists, Miss Sayers conveys quality by sticking to famous names and vintages. In a memorable scene in *Clouds of Witness* a post (shapper unknown) of 1847 is produced by the butler to show the late 1875

In *The Hidden Places of Britain* (256pp. Arlington Books, £9.95, 0 85140 542 8) Leslie Thomas has recorded his travels over a period of ten years to a variety of remote and picturesque localities from the Shetlands to Cornwall. The book is illustrated with photographs by Peter Chad Brown and drawings by Shirley Falls.

## Partial glimpses of the flame

By Steve Ellis

JOHN MOLE:  
Feeding the Lake  
58pp. Secker and Warburg. £4.50.  
0 436 28040 X

PREGNANT SHADOWS:  
Tanager Shadows  
44pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £3.50.  
0 283 98757 X

CAL CLOTHIER:  
Death Mask  
27pp. Bradford: Rivelin Press. £1.  
0 94524 27 2

LEO AYLEN:  
Red Alert: This is a God Warning  
43pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £3.50.  
0 283 98818 5

ROGER MCGOUGH:  
Unlucky for Some  
25pp. Bernard Stone. £1.50.

*Feeding the Lake* is a varied and consistently effective collection of poems with themes that range from ballroom dancers and park ducks to reflections on Easter and Shakespeare, and with forms that include a sequence of "Five Circus Songs" and "ventriloquist" poems by Baudelaire and Mallarmé. What unites the volume is the absence of triviality in the lighter poems and of overstatement in the more serious; all the facets of Mole's experience are presented in a thoughtful and technically painstaking manner which gives

each poem the quality of a meditation. We do not meet with urgent passion or with particularly vivid imagery, though Mole certainly possesses a gift for appropriate and memorable phrasing; the keynote of the collection is rather detachment, the sense of a balance in life between love and beauty and their adversaries, conceptualized as "The Scales", to quote one of his titles. "The Skater" is a fine example of Mole's controlled celebration:

Narrowing, narrowing, she tightens  
To a point  
The spin, the flash,  
The spent coin of her fate.  
Who loves her? The State  
Manoeuvres on ice  
And in step, but without, oh without  
Her grace. Too late  
Its applause for such beauty comes,  
A luxury, exchange  
At the wrong rate  
Which will buy no guins  
And can save no one;  
Yet how she loosens and leaps now  
To strains of Rachmaninov  
And how, at the end, she bows  
As if offering love  
From the heart of this cold rink,  
And how, oh how she is more beautiful  
Than the patterns she made.

Mole's approach to the skater and analogy with the State is characteristic of his use of the everyday environment as the starting-point for more abstract reflections; we see the details of that environment through the medium of an attention that is at once tender and distant, as if through a sheet of misted glass. The result, as again in a poem like "Ball-

## A Footnote

Old Sam Arkwright, son of man, who clothes the town in big-city cast-offs, once was big in wool: all he knew. His emotions line up like village toughs and stalk a world he's embellished with bold strokes. A mistress keeps in furs, and fakes it well to preserve his myth-making screws; like all good cats she purrs and scratches in equal doses. Sam grows with each new precinct, each fine car-park, or says he does; and he always knows what's best for his little town. He'll walk for nothing behind the band, his heart is strong as a fist but he dreams of blood. One day, some say, they'll fetch a cart and put the biggest under for good.

Stephen Oldfield

Cal Clothier's *Death Mask* contains eleven poems, about half of which are subdivided into several sections, and whether he writes about Crete, South America, or the death of an old woman in provincial England, Clothier never fails to

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